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WHITE DWARF

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THE ROLE-PLAYING GAMES MONTHLY

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ISSUE 84 DECEMBER 1986

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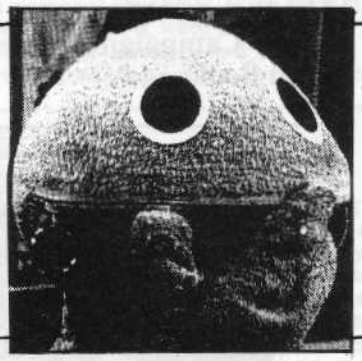

Quick, quick, you must listen... I've something very important to tell- oh no! He's *here!* Not so soon, not so soo *AAAAIIIIIIEEEEEEEEE!!!!!... squeeek...*

Paul Cockburn

Yes, it's that time of the month again. A New *White Dwarf*. A New *White Dwarf* Editor. OK, confession time. Paul was, in fact, a Sweep-lookalike glove puppet and I have been the editor all along.

All that aside, in keeping with the policy of Getting Things Wrong on WD, this issue does not contain an extra 8 pages. Sorry. We're saving them for something special in a couple of months. But to make up for the (unavoidable) delay, we have printed some maps for a *Paranoia* adventure. Maybe not the right maps, but...

Oh, and by the way, Merry Christmas.

Mike Brunton

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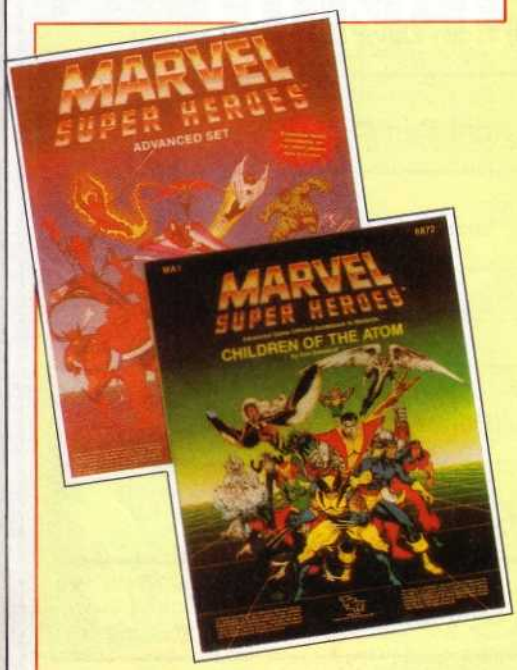


MARVEL SUPER HEROES ADVANCED SET
Roleplaying Game
TSR £9.95

MA1 CHILDREN OF THE ATOM
Campaign Supplement
TSR £7.50

Who needs an **MSH Advanced Set** when you've got an *MSH Basic Set*? What you want to know is, are they going to do the *AD&D* trick again and keep both sets going as 'different games'? My guess is that they will. *MSH Advanced* is not just a revision or second edition. It is 'Advanced' because the rules are much more complex (though not necessarily more difficult to use, of which more later), but the balance and nature of the game was changed far more radically by *Realms of Magic* than by anything in *MSH Advanced*. Interestingly, the magic system is not officially a part of *MSH Advanced*.

First of all, for the benefit of established MSH players, what's new? Character generation for a start. In the original set it was assumed that everyone would play Marvel characters, though a simple character generation system was tacked on as an afterthought. *MSH Advanced* does the job properly. Attributes can now take any value, and rank is defined by the range into which the score falls. 'Monstrous' always used to mean 75, it can now mean anything between 63 and 87. The main advantage of this is to allow characters to progress in lots of small steps rather than a few big ones, something I think most players prefer.

The FEAT and combat systems have been expanded somewhat to give more types of action and better definitions of what you can do and the results of doing it. Something that caught my eye here is the fact that a Marvel character's chance of performing special tricks with his powers is dependant on how many times the comics have shown him doing it. If that's not asking for arguments with players, I don't know what is.

Resources are now an attribute rather than a pool of points to be spent, and each power also has a rating to determine how strong it is and allow power FEATs. Negative popularity is now official. Area movement has been kept, but there is an alternative 'ranged movement' system as well. There are some comprehensive tables detailing stats for weapons and vehicles and some rules for building an HQ. The Universal Table has been expanded a bit at the upper end so as to distinguish the merely mega-powerful from the tega- and gega-powerful beings with which the Marvel Universe is increasingly becoming populated. The Beyonder's column becomes official too.

And that's about it as far as rules go. Jeff Grubb has done a pretty slick job, both in expanding the system without over-complicating it (excepting the new movement system which seems a bit intricate) and in explaining it in an entertaining manner.

So, do you need it? In his introduction Jeff Grubb says that the first set is for newcomers whereas *MSH Advanced* is for people who know how to roleplay. Dingoes' kidneys. Very young kids will be happy with the original MSH rules because they move fast and are uncomplicated. As they get older, they will indeed need all of the advice, assistance and guidelines in the Advanced set to help them learn how to run roleplaying games. Once they know how they can throw the rules away again.

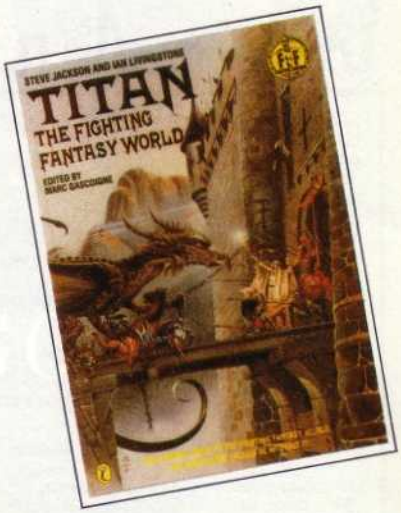
TSR seem to believe in simple, improvisational games for kids and complex, rule-heavy ones for adults. In line with this, the *MSH Advanced* Judges' Book is little more than a monster manual - statistics for all the major Marvel characters re-done for the new system. All of the rules of the game are in the Players' Book. It looks like we've got another generation of rules lawyers in the making.

Whether you need *MSH Advanced* depends on how you like to run your games. If you're starting out, provided it is not your first roleplaying game, I'd go for the Advanced game but be prepared to treat a lot of what it says as guidelines only.

So much for the system, what about the goodies? In the game you get the usual soft plastic dice and wax crayon, card character sheets for the Marvel characters and guaranteed-to-fall-over card figures. And a map. Yes, New York again. Is that five or six sections now? Anyway, it's huge and it's wonderful and, if you've got the lot, a great play aid.

The other package available for the Advanced rules is **MA1 Children of the Atom**, an encyclopedia of mutant-kind: their powers, their friends, enemies, homes and equipment. In essence, it is *Project Wideawake* re-done for *MSH Advanced*, though it is vastly more comprehensive. Neverthless, as is the way with such things, it is already way out of date, Chris Claremont having sabotaged it by introducing wholesale changes in the X-Men comic whilst the book was in production. Nor is it fully comprehensive, no Power Pack, for example. There is an adventure at the end but it's not very impressive. If you look at it as an MSH Monster Manual you'll get the basic idea. X-Men fans and students of the Marvel Universe will love it, others may find it a complete waste of time, especially as original statistics have already been published for most of the characters listed.

Pete Tamlyn



TITAN
Fantasy Campaign Supplement
Puffin Books £4.95

KING OF CRIME & ETERNITY INC
DC Heroes Adventures
Mayfair £4.95 each

DELTA FORCE: AMERICA STRIKES BACK
Role Playing Game
Task Force Games £110.95

What's this, then? The august pages of WD turned over to a review of another of those contemptible little kiddy-books? Just because it's written by that Marc Gascoigne person. Goes to show just how much of a house magazine WD has become.

Well, no, actually.

Titan is a magazine-size paperback, like its predecessor *Out of the Pit*, and is produced to the same high standard. It is a complete guide and source book for the *Fighting Fantasy* world, drawing together all the background information from the gamebooks and fleshing it out into a complete fantasy world.

Ah, but, I hear roleplaying snobs saying, if it's for those silly little gamebooks it's bound to be simplistic, trite, full of shopworn ideas and condescendingly written.

Wrong again.

While *Titan* will be a sure-fire best-seller among FF afficionados, it shouldn't be written off as just one more for the kiddies. *Fighting Fantasy* is mentioned a few times, as you might expect, but what *Titan* is, when you think about it, is a systemless world source book - and an remarkably complete one at that - which can be used with just about any mainstream RPG.

The contents are impressive, no matter which way you look at it. Three continents are mapped and described in detail, with notes on the undersea realms and an interesting short section on the stars and constellations that can be seen from the planet.

There is a wealth of rich background information on history and mythology, tracing Titan's development from its creation through the Time of Heroes and the Spawning of Chaos to the 'present day' of the New Age.

The deities and races of Good, Neutrality and Chaos each receive a chapter,and the major races are lovingly detailed, with notes on their society, history, racial traits and some very useful settlement plans.

As well as a complete mythology and pantheon, familiar characters from the gamebooks - Shareella the Snow Witch, Sukumvit and Lord Azzur of Blacksand to name but three - are covered in depth, providing several fully-detailed powerful/legendary NPC personalities.

Finally, there are plans of a tavern and a wizard's tower, and a two-page city map of Port Blacksand - a shame this couldn't be done as a fold-out, since some detail gets lost in the fold, but that's about my only quibble with the book. The whole thing is beautifully produced, and lavishly illustrated to the high standards one would expect from Puffin. The only thing it obviously lacks is an adventure, which would have been nice.

Fighting Fantasy may not be one of the best-thought-of RPG systems among 'serious' roleplayers, but it does have its good points. And in *Titan* it has just acquired a few more good points. How many other RPGs can boast a 128-page world guide, especially for this price?

The FF logo may put some off, but the package itself is systemless and everyone who plays a mainstream fantasy rpg should at least give it a look. If it were produced by a 'serious' games company, boxed and sold at £10.95, *Titan* would be acclaimed as a useful rpg aid. At £4.95, it's probably the best value around in fantasy RPG source books.

Graeme Davis

The sheer quantity of adventures that Mayfair has produced for *DC Heroes* hasmeant that quite a few of them have been reviewed very skimpily, or even missed being covered at all. This is a shame, firstly because there are some plots in amongst them that are easily adaptable to other super hero games, and also, doubtless because of the hectic publication schedule, there is some awful tripe as well. Knowing which is which before buying can be something of a problem.

For example, I was delighted to be given **King of Crime** because Jeff O'Hare's previous effort, *Blood Feud*, is easily the best super hero adventure I've ever seen. *King of Crime*, whilst no disaster, isn't in the same league. I've tried cross-referencing editors as well. Scott Jenkins was responsible for **Eternity Inc**, which is very good, and got a credit on *Blood Feud*, but he was also part responsible for the abysmal *Siege*. I give up. Just try to read a review before you buy, because a fiver for 32 pages and no play aids is not good value unless the adventure is really good.

King of Crime, then, is a For Your Own Heroes™ (and you thought TSR/Marvel loved trademarks!) adventure. What Jeff O'Hare has done here is create a campaign setting for player-generated characters and people it with a group of villains who can provide both an introductory adventure and a regular source of enemies.

The game is cleverly based in Central City which, with the demise of the Flash, is devoid of super powered protection. The bad guys are all well known DC cannon fodder. Unfortunately the Central City background isn't a patch on MSH's New York, and the adventure plot is like something out of the Batman TV series. I think the problem is that the project was beyond the scope of a 32 page package, and it wasn't helped by having an editor who wouldn't even keep the mayor's name constant throughout the booklet. Shame.

Eternity Inc, in contrast, is a very nice package, perhaps something to do with the fact that Roy Thomas of DC is listed in the script-writing credits. You can always tell a good adventure because when you come to review it you find that you daren't say anything about the plot least you spoil it for the players.

Suffice it to say that the bad guys are Gorilla Grodd and some Neanderthal sorcerers, and that Grodd is firmly in the Lex Luthor/Brainiac league of villains. The heroes for which the adventure is written are Infinity Inc, one of DC's lesser-known teams, but the plot is not in any way dependant on the nature of the heroes. It could be run for anyone, which is another useful aspect. Recommended.

Pete Tamlyn

Tantalised by the mention in *Fracas* recently, weren't you? Now, at last - The Review! **Delta Force**, the role-playing game of an elite anti-terrorist commando unit, in which you play clean-living American boys, ready to defend the world against '...shadow organisations with names such as the PLO, Islamic Jihad and KGB...' seeking to overthrow the West in 'sneak attacks of blood and terror.' Hmm. Classy, eh?

It's got three books - the Rules of Play (48pp), the Warbook (40pp) and the Scenarios (32pp) - a referee's screen (an unusual inclusion in games nowadays; very useful it is too), and a pair of miniscule dice, so small that your players will find it remarkably easy to lose them, swallow them, etc. All the printed stuff is plastered with pictures of men with big guns, kitted out in survival gear and sporting those natty little black woolly hats. Just like in the films.

Actually, the game itself isn't too bad - the rules are fairly comprehensive, and don't waste space getting their point across. One aspect in particular is odd. A player never find out what his/her character's stamina is (Delta's version of hit points); not a bad idea to keep players wondering how far away they are from death, but a bit of a bind for the referee who gets lumbered with the book-keeping. Damage is actually taken off all statistics except Training and Experience, but it's Stamina falling to zero that kills your commando. Combat is intricate - realistic, but not as playable as I like (there are too many modifiers for a start). It can prove deadly too. Rules for hand-to-hand combat (again, more complicated than I like), strategic movement, demolitions (extensive, and well done), airdrops, communications and morale round out the book.

The Warbook contains pages of information on weapons, vehicles, combat gear and about twenty terrorist organisations - the IRA, PLO, Baader-Meinhof, etc - plus eight anti-terrorist units - the SAS, Delta Force, Unit 777 and so on. Commendably detailed, and all too real. Which just leaves us with...

The scenarios. Of which there are three. All titled 'Operation...', they give our Brave American Boys a chance to swing into action, freeing hostages, or destroying planning centres and making it look like a rocket attack (?). All pretty much in the same sort of vein. They all have victory conditions, another unusual feature in an RPG, belonging more to wargames. Other aspects of *Delta Force* reinforce this similarity - the use of overly technical terms and the intricate combat system all smack of wargames.

I suppose I ought to take a shot at criticising the background. Like *Twilight 2000*, the good ol' Americans are in the thick of it, protecting life and liberty for us civilians, right? Nope. That one isn't true as the game also lets you be one of the SAS or Isreal's Sayaret Maktal. It's unquestionably tasteless, and the scope of the game is narrow. I can't foresee anyone running a long-term campaign - the text makes no attempt to suggest adventures beond the 'beat up the terrorists' sort given in the game. One page of hints sums up about all you need to know as a *Delta Force* referee, and all of that's pretty obvious.

In all, not a *bad* game, I suppose, but it's very unethical and awfully tasteless. Is it OK to talk about ethics and taste in a review? No? Give me a chance to hide then...

Phil Frances

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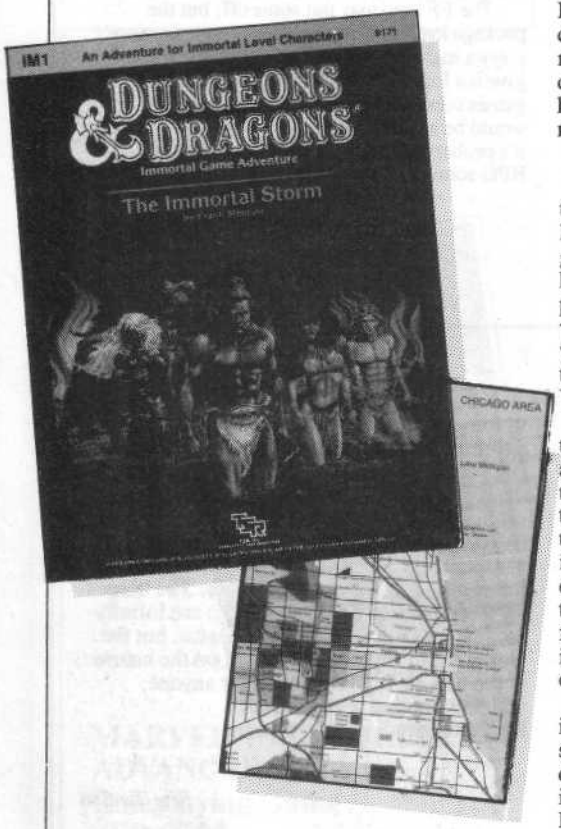


IM1 THE IMMORTAL STORM
Dungeons & Dragons Adventure
TSR £5.50

As its code number suggests, **IM1 The Immortal Storm** is the first module for the *D&D Immortals* rules, designed for a party of Novice Temporals, the lowest level of Immortal character.

A strange, supernatural storm has appeared to threaten the multiverse; the Hierarchs of all Spheres are powerless to destroy it, and can only sit and watch as the strange, supernatural eye at the centre of the strange, supernatural storm sits and watches them. Then, strangely, the storm makes contact. Hands up anybody who recognises similarities so far with a certain *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*.

The storm's message takes the form of a verse, which looks dangerously like a puzzle; it is a puzzle, in fact, although it is not the type of puzzle that it appears to be at first glance. In case Our Heroes don't solve the puzzle, the Hierarchs have already cracked it, and solving it is all part of the test to see if they are fit to undertake The Mission. This is fine in principle, but of course everybody knows that Our Heroes will get the mission no matter how badly they do on this little test. The other logical flaw is that the message from the storm lists the things which are needed to destroy it; quite why it should choose to do this is beyond me, but then I'm not an Immortal.

Anyway, Our Heroes now have a list of ingredients, and have to go traipsing round a number of different planes to collect them. This is disappointing, and a waste of the enormous scope of Immortal characters. The scenario would have been far more interesting and challenging if Our Heroes had to deal with the storm themselves, rather than being sent out to do the shopping.

The different planes are imaginative for the most part, but a couple of them do stick in the throat a little. For example, the plane which consists entirely of music staves and which is inhabited by sentient musical notes smacks more of Dr. Seuss than D&D, especially when the characters are recruited by a noble breve to help rid the plane of the dreaded Rogue Atonal Crotchet. And I'm not sure about the Plane of Earth having air-filled tunnels so that its inhabitants can move about, either.

After adventuring on many strange planes throughout the multiverse, there's only one place left for the climax of the adventure. Yep, you guessed it, New York. Well, you see, Our Heroes happen to need something from this humble little plane of ours, and as everybody knows, if it's vital to the survival of the multiverse, well gee whiz, it's just *gotta* be in the USA. I must admit, though, having an inter-planar gate on the New York subway might explain a thing or two.

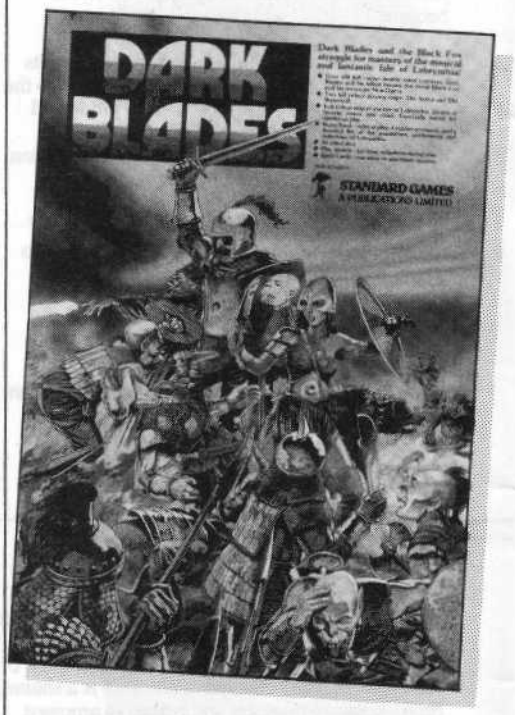
Be that as it may, the adventurers now have the opportunity to explore the cities of New York and Chicago, encountering street gangs, leaping tall buildings, and so on. I'm not convinced that this part of the adventure comes off as it was intended - the idea of D&D adventurers encountering our own world is a seductive one from the design point of view, but it takes a very good DM to present the world to players as strange and unfamiliar, and very good players to go along with it and not pass on their world knowledge to their characters.

I've said that this is the climax of the module - it is, but it's not the last part. The final part of the story was probably *intended* as the climax, but it does fall a bit flat. Having collected the ingredients, counted the experience points and Power Points, and so on, our heroes then compete for the honour of standing guarding the Hierarch who will actually be doing the business of destroying the storm. There are some interesting ideas for running the Olympics (I wish Frank Mentzer had chosen a more imaginative name) by which Immortal characters rise through the ranks, but after that it just becomes a coda in which one player fights off the storm's attempts to defend itself while the others sit and twiddle their thumbs.

All in all, then, there are a number of logical flaws, such as why this indestructible storm should tell people the means by which it can be destroyed, and then defend itself when they try. A lot of the action is out of the characters' hands, too - in case they don't solve the puzzle, the Hierarchs have already worked it out, and so on - and the possiblities of newly-Immortal characters are severely wasted by sending them on a trip down to the shops. I'm sure that it would have been possible to come up with something a little more grand in scale for the first Immortals module. This gives the impression of having been conceived and written in a hurry as a simultaneous release to support the rules. The bulk of the interior artwork is more what you would expect from a fanzine than from a TSR module, and I found myself wondering whether there just happened to be these *Marvel Super Heroes* maps of New York and Chicago at the back of a drawer somewhere... Having said all that, the module does have its moments, but my overall impression was one of disappointment.

Graeme Davis

OPEN BOX QUICKIES



DARK BLADES - Board Wargame - Standard Games £11.50

It's about time someone made a good, simple beginner's fantasy board wargame, and while it isn't perfect *Dark Blades* is a good move towards that end. Based on the fairly popular Cry Havoc game system, this game is fast and simple to play, but has enough flexibility to cope with sophisticated manoeuvers and combatants with special powers. The rules are presented in Standard's usual simple but effective way, though they could probably have done with another proofread. The playing pieces, however, are very pleasant. Though a little on the thin side, they are well-drawn and very clear. The 2 mapboards, too, are very neat, drawn in the same style as those in Cry Havoc, though why they only feature a watermill and an arena-like depression respectively is a mystery to me. I would have thought there were far more useful settings they could have provided.

In fact, this limitation is part of the major flaw behind the game. Everything, for a start, is tied in to some spurious background which seeks to explain the events leading up to the particular scenarios included in the game, but also drags the rest of the game with it. *Dark Blades* is all about the exploits of the hero of that name and his band of friends. All well and good, perhaps, but this game would be far more universal if the background wasn't there. What is needed at the moment isn't just a good beginner's fantasy board wargame - it's a universally-applicable game in which players can set up their own scenarios, free from the influence of half-baked backgrounds like this one. So, a good try but limited by a rather tacky background; but if you really can't wait for the real thing to come along this is for you.

RN

CARSE - Generic Play-aid - Chaosium £6.95

After the disaster that was *Cities* (reviewed last month), it's a relief to note that this companion volume is a good deal better. The 56-page booklet plus fold-out map explores the minor city of Carse in some detail, making the book a useful source for any vaguely Medieval Europe-influenced fantasy games. I say 'minor' because Carse is a rather small place, certainly not up to the scale of somewhere like that old favourite, the City State of the Invincible Overlord (for those readers who weren't born when it was around, this was an immense city produced by the legendary Judges Guild). However, real Medieval cities weren't all huge sprawling places, and Carse may be small but it's pleasantly formed. There is enough detail here to provide even the laziest referee with more than enough material to run city adventures for a few years to come. If this pack has a fault it's that there is perhaps too much detail spent on individual shop owners and tavern-keepers, and not enough providing proper adventure opportunities for players (putting this pack into poor second when compared to Blade's useful *City Book* series, for example). Players are never going to get around every last shop in the city - they'll surely use the ones they need and then head off in search of adventure. I would have liked this pack to provide a few more opportunities for such things, but on the whole *Carse* is competently done, neatly-produced and well worthy of your attention if a well-detailed city is what you are after. *RN*

SOLOMANI - Traveller Alien Module - GDW £4.95

They came blasting out from Terra to overthrow the Vilani First Imperium, but the Solomani were unable to hold onto their new empire and it collapsed into the Long Night. Over 1500 years later, a new power arose - the Third Imperium. But around the old homeworld of Terra, a movement began to enhance the position of genetically pure Terrans and the Solomani Movement was born. The Solomani Rim war was fought to prove Solomani supremacy and to establish an independent Solomani state. The war was inconclusive and to this day many Solomani worlds lie outside of Imperial jurisdiction in the Solomani Confederation.

This pack details life in the Confederation and provides a good feeling for its society, which although human is also very alien. With their doctrine of racial supremacy, Solomani think and act differently from Imperial citizens. Life in the Confederation is closely monitored, and if you hold different views to the accepted norm, you'd better keep them to yourself. Players creating characters with the Solomani generation system do so in secret with the referee, so that other players do not know who is a member of SolSec, the Solomani Security Force. Even if your are a SolSec member, whatever you do is likely to be reported by another player to the Party, so you better make sure you're a good Party member. Like previous alien modules, *Solomani* vividly recreates an alien society; it's a must for any campaign set in or near the Solomani Confederation. *JB*

ALIEN REALMS - Traveller Supplement - GDW £4.95

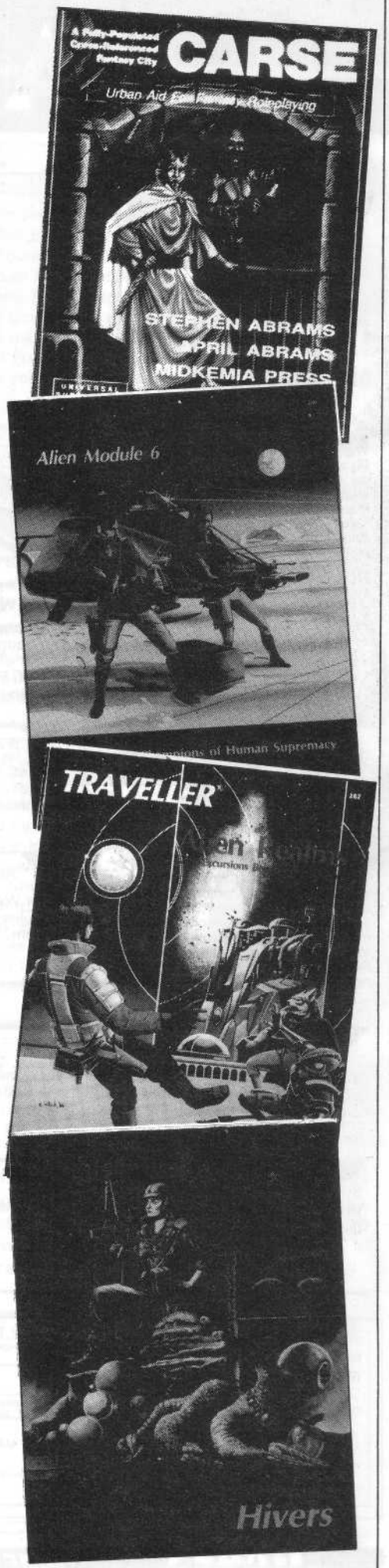
To Imperial citizens the Zhodani are threatening and abhorrent - mind reading Machiavellis who are out to take over the Imperium and impose their rigid society upon it. But what if you are a Zhodani - a member of a society where everyone's thoughts are known and so everyone is extremely honest (and those that aren't are soon corrected by the Thought Police)? What would you do when faced with Imperial citizens, everyone of them a liar, cheat and a secretive schemer? How would you react? *Alien Realms* features eight adventures involving such decisions. On the whole they do an admirable job of reflecting the alien backgrounds and provide good jumping off points for a number of alien campaigns. A few are, however, more limited in their scope, and one of the Aslan adventures reads more like a trip through Imperial space than a journey set in the Aslan Heirate. A couple of the adventures are more or less ready to run, but most need a substantial amount of referee input to flesh them out and bring them to life. Those willing to put in the time, will be rewarded with some very enjoyable and unusual gaming sessions. This module is highly recommended to referees and players interested in new roleplaying experiences. If you are looking for some ideas with what can be done with alien characters, *Alien Realms* has plenty of suggestions. *JB*

HIVERS - Traveller Alien Module - GDW £4.95

Physically the Hivers are unlike the other major races resembling starfish more than anything else. They are asexual, each Hiver capable of giving birth to other Hivers. However, it is their society which sets the Hivers apart from other alien races. In the past the K'Kree invaded Hiver space, easily pushing back the Hivers who have an instinctive dislike of violence. The war was, though, won by the Hivers without resort to violence, for in Hiver society exist those known as Manipulators who dedicate themselves to altering Hiver society in subtle but major ways. Hiver manipulators were able to dramatically alter the K'Kree on a few chosen planets. Faced with this power, the K'Kree rapidly withdrew, 'cleansed' the affected planets and never bothered the Hivers again.

Details of the Hiver manipulators and other aspects of Hiver society are well covered in this module, making it possible to use Hivers as both NPCs and player characters. Information is also provided on the subject races of the Hivers - the races that make up their military forces and who are free of the Hivers' dislike of personal combat. While Hivers deplore personal violence, they are masters of long range combat; also, Hiver computers are the most advanced available. Ventures into Hiver space will be quite unlike those set anywhere else, for this is a truly alien society, but one easily grasped and used by Human characters. *Hivers* completes the survey of the seven major races. Whether this will be the last, or whether future modules will deal with some of the lesser races remains to be seen. Nevertheless, *Hivers* is yet another valuable and impressive addition to the *Traveller* universe. *JB*

(Reviews by Jim Bambra & Robert Neville.)



CRITICAL MASS

A regular book review column, written by Dave Langford

FIFTH FOUNDATION

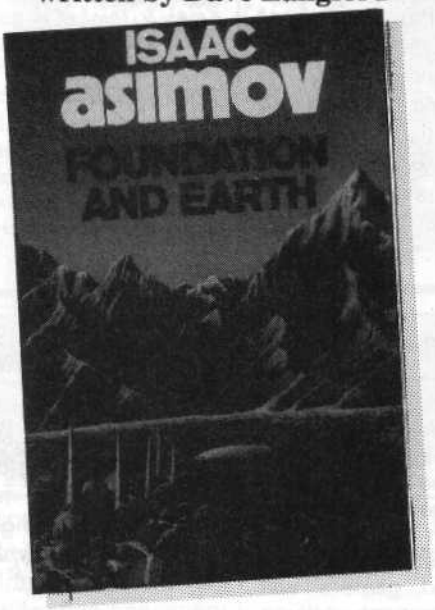
They found me twitching and babbling in the bar at Games Day. Kindly *White Dwarf* attempted to rally me with promises (of beer) and threats (of *Warhammer* novelizations), but still your reviewer gibbered about robots and Lensmen and Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, while significant fingers were tapped against foreheads. This was all because of what I'd been reading on the train...

Foundation and Earth (Grafton 464pp £10.95) is number 5 in the trilogy, and my seizure was brought on by the thought that Isaac Asimov has hit the same problem on his intellectual level that E E Smith met on the physical one. Doc Smith's Lensmen were forever fighting more and more galactic-powered foes (no sooner does Boskone invent an ultimate weapon than Kim Kinnison retorts with a *more* ultimate one!). Asimov's 'intellectual Lensmen' are constantly uncovering deeper Secrets of the Universe: as with Smith's ever-huger megaweapons, the great revelations soon pall. They loom portentously, like Kuhn's paradigm shifts which topple whole sciences; they never match up to the hype. The strings of the Galaxy are pulled by the Foundation... no, the Second Foundation... no, 'Gaia'... no, Earth... no, in fact.... The ultimate-for-now answer is not a lemon but a robot left over from a novel set 20,000 years earlier, and really who cares?

This isn't as dull as the fearful *Foundation's Edge*; there's more movement and colour in its travelogue of ancient, ruined worlds (unfortunately recalling similar and better travelogues by Clarke, who could make you *feel* that 20,000-year gulf as Asimov never does — cf *The City and the Stars*). Its final line throbs with implied sequels, but Asimov seemingly intends to backtrack: promised next is *Prelude to Foundation*...

Foundation and Earth is very 1940s, bar a little discreet sex. *Heart of the Comet* by Gregory Benford and David Brin (Bantam 468pp £9.95) is very 1980s: big, slick, skilled, geared to the Halley's Comet market, and moving along painstakingly high-tech paths to the already traditional visions of a quantum leap in human evolution. On the comet's *next* pass (2060s), Earth plants an experimental community to ride the long orbit and test exploitation plans: eg could Mars be terraformed by comet-ice impacts? The mission is soon in trouble with unsuspected Halley life-forms, including — a little joke for D&D fans — purple worms. As expected from these highly qualified authors, the science is elaborate and convincing. Less so the characters: women are 'deliciously unpredictable' with 'breasts hard and high', while the only memorable man is a hyper-Jewish super-biologist who almost single-handedly copes with every problem Halley can offer. 'You know what mitochondria are, right' he says confidently, but don't worry — the chap he's talking to gives the answer ('in a hollow voice') for your benefit. Whopping concepts and evocative descriptions boost the novel half-way to excellence, but are defeated by the dead weight of the stereotypes and lecturing. Hard SF fans will forgive its flaws.

In 1973 I bought Brian Aldiss's fine history of science ficion, *Billion Year Spree*; the new edition is **Trillion Year Spree** (with David Wingrove: Gollancz 511pp £9.95),



longer by 200 pages of smaller type. SF criticism suffers from clotted academic prose and/or ungrammatical enthusiasm: this is a worthy updating of the best-written history yet seen. Not that it's infallible — I disagree with certain judgements, while it can seem unjust that author X is dismissed as excellent in a line or two while the inferior Y is quoted at length to illustrate a point. The editors of poor old *Interzone* (Britain's only current SF magazine) are probably committing mass hara-kiri at finding themselves merely 'a pallid successor of *New Worlds*'. I was pleased and alarmed to learn from the useful index that I too have become History... Despite that, the new *Spree* is an essential reference and a good read.

A treat for the eye rather than the brain, **Sirens** (Paper Tiger 128pp £7.95) is Chris Achilleos's second art collection. This column has heretical views on fantasy art: I suspect Achilleos is superior in technique to Frazetta (who falls too easily into visual clichés) and Boris (obsessed with static over-musculature), but am unmoved by most of the airbrush hyper-realism here. 'I don't know much about Art, but I know what I don't like.' Those who think of Achilleos as a painter of improbable female breasts will not be disappointed (our statistician reports 114 and a half, 54% of them unclad). For fighting fantasy fans there's a chapter of favourites, including plugs for *Dwarf* and its Chaos Death Founders. People who like books like this will like this book.

The Lordly Ones by Keith Roberts (Gollancz 160pp £8.95) contains 7 more stories from one of the finest (if occasionally erratic) stylists in SF or fantasy. Breakdown: SF 4, fantasy 2, ghost 1. Only Roberts could write a moving and horrowing post-holocaust tale set in a public lavatory... and then write another. Recommended.

Here's one you didn't see in hardback: don't miss **The Borribles: Across the Dark Metropolis** by Michael de Larrabeiti (Piccolo 332pp £1.95). The Bodley Head hardback was cancelled by its publishers, who got cold feet about the Bad Example set by clashes between savage street kids — Borribles — and grotesquely appalling police. You probably remember the way your first reading of *Alice in Wonderland* compelled you to dive down holes and take drugs. In fact, de Larrabeiti's third epic has worthy things to say about honour and trust... in between spurts of adrenalin. Again London's underside is the nightmare background for a quest, and the tortuous journey from Battersea to Neasden has a far higher death toll than that relatively cosy toddle through Mordor. Triumph is bloody (especially in the luridly detailed Camden slaughterhouse) and expensive. Black comedy also abounds: anyone fool enough to confuse the luxuriously nose-picking Sergeant Hanks ('First class that one, looks like a well-fed whelk') with a real policeman must have as tenuous a grasp of reality as a *Dwarf* or Bodley Head editor.

James Stephen's 1912 **The Crock of Gold** (Picador 172pp £2.95) is more in the traditional fantasy vein, though not much. It's an Irish whimsy, shot with gods and leprechauns (it should doubtless be suppressed for its subversive hints that Irish policeman can't handle leprechauns) and dotty philosophy. As the Philosopher remarks: 'Finality is death. Perfection is finality. Nothing is perfect. There are lumps in it.' Bag this for your shelf of fantasy classics: it may go out of print for further decades.

The rest of the SF seems to have sunk to the bottom of the column. **Voyage to the City of the Dead** by Alan Dean Foster (NEL 243pp £2.25) offers page-turning hokum as two bickering, married scientists make their way by hydrofoil up an alien river, overcoming with ease such obstacles as the theft of their boat by hostile tribes, or attacks by ravening abominable snowmen. Just to make sure, the author has an emergency *deus ex machina* waiting to save them from the final peril... **Dayworld** by Philip José Farmer (Grafton 322pp £2.50): another fast-moving example of a far-out social setup within which the author merely plays cops and robbers. To 'solve' overpopulation, everyone lives only one day a week, passing the rest in suspended animation. High crime consists of 'daybreaking', living outside your appointed weekday. Our hero is an arch-daybreaker with seven identities, one being a cop who pursues daybreakers, etc, etc. Terry Carr's **Best SF of the Year 15** (Gollancz 365pp £3.95) is as always well chosen, a dozen of 1985's finest stories which I've no room to list here.

Also received: **Helliconia Winter** by Brian Aldiss (Granada 393pp £2.95), fine gloomy stuff, already reviewed; **White Wing** by Gordon Kendall (Sphere 308pp £2.95), soporific militarist SF; **Swords in the Mist** by Fritz Leiber (Grafton 189pp £2.50), Fafhrd/Mouser reissue; **Footfall** by Larry Niven & Jerry Pournelle (Sphere 700pp £3.95), exciting SF despite longueurs and crassness; **27th Pan Book of Horror Stories** ed. Clarence Paget (Pan 187pp £1.95) with a token Stephen King reprint; **One Million Tomorrows** by Bob Shaw (Grafton 176pp £2.50), thoughtful SF novel of immortality; **A Blackbird to Darkness** by Freda Warrington (NEL 473pp £3.50), fantasy in which 'the daring quest continues'... the bloody things always do, don't they?

AND NOW LADIES AND GENTLEMEN — THE MOMENT YOU'VE ALL BEEN WAITING FOR, HERE HE IS; THAT MASTER OF QUICK WIT AND REPARTEE, THE ORIGINAL TEN TON BUNDLE OF FUN
PLEASE PUT YOUR HANDS TOGETHER FOR YOUR FAVOURITE AND MINE — HEEERE'S THRUDDIE!
THRUD THE BARBARIAN
©CARL CRITCHLOW '86
DER DE DE DE DE DE DE DE DE DE DER
SKID
?
SPLATCH!
RIGHT! THAT DOES IT!
I DON'T CARE IF YOU DO THINK WE NEED A CHANGE — IN FUTURE WE STICK TO KILLING PEOPLE TO GET LAUGHS — UNDERSTAND?

DON'T CALL US

HOW TO GET THE MESSAGE ACROSS IN RPGS

BY SIMON NICHOLSON

Communication is such an integral part of our lives that we often forget its importance. The impact of telephone, radio and television upon society cannot be overestimated, yet we ignore and accept them without thinking.

Since most fantasy worlds are set in 'medieval' milieu, they might appear rather limited in the field of communication. Technology in the Middle Ages was responsible mostly for war engines and weaponry, since Man has always preferred to resolve arguments with violence rather than words. Very few people could read or write, so information was conveyed by word of mouth for the most part. Interaction between towns and cities consisted of news and tales told by passing merchants and travellers. This news was often inaccurate (the teller would have heard it from someone who heard it from someone else who...) and sometimes completely untrue. Villages were built on the roads between towns, and took advantage of them by having inns, stables and blacksmiths; a weary traveller could rest at the inn while his horse was reshod. The villagers, eager for news of the outside world, would press the traveller for information — the offer of a drink could loosen the most exhausted tongue. I expect that a good storyteller would be greatly welcomed by the inn's regulars, whether the tales were true or not; he might, in return, learn something of his destination (the origin of the infamous Rumour Table). Travellers were not great in number, however. The average man was likely to grow up, marry, and die within ten miles of his birthplace. It is not hard to understand why *any* news was appreciated.

Written communication was common among the educated classes. Since the educated were rich, they could afford servants to carry messages. Envoys and emissaries were often used by the rulers to make sure that the laws were upheld in every part of the land. Proof of their authority consisted of a signed charter bearing the ruler's seal. The messages that they brought were handwritten; the first form of printing appeared in the middle of the fifteenth century, however, so you might like to include printing devices in your game. If you do so, however, beware: the printed word carries an aura of authority and power that has caused revolution and reform.

So much for history — what about fantasy? When you consider the factors which actually make it fantasy — the abundance of adventurers, the reality of magic, the existence of monsters — it becomes obvious that a rational fantasy world could be far removed from its historical foundations. This depends, of course, on the extent of the fantastic elements in your roleplaying game: the existence of unicorns wouldn't drastically alter a medieval society, since they were believed to exist anyway; religious magic, on the other hand, would reinforce the people's faith and consequently priests would become the most important people in the land.

Let us re-examine communication in the light of this. Our fantasy world contains many wealthy people, rich from their days of adventure, who would undoubtedly benefit from being able to communicate with distant towns and castles. One way to fill this gap would be to have a Guild of Messengers and Carriers. The Guild would consist of trained riders, who would carry letters and small items to their destination for a fee. If set routes and strict delivery times were used the fee could be reduced to a reasonable price, since one rider may carry many letters. Awkward or dangerous destinations could be handled by armed riders, although the Guild would not undertake a mission whose risk was too great.

The riders themselves would probably use horses for mundane deliveries; since this is fantasy, however, there is no reason why stranger, unnatural beasts should not be used. Flying creatures such as the gryphon makes excellent steeds if tamed.

SIGNALS

Bonfires have long been used as a means of signalling. In the sixteenth century, a chain of pyres was built along the southern coastline of England to warn of the Spanish Armada. Each pyre was within sight of the next, and a watch was maintained at each. If the Spanish ships were sighted, the beacon was to be lit. The flames would be seen by the next watchman, who would light his beacon, and so the signal would pass along the chain to Plymouth, alerting the Navy and preparing the coast for invasion.

The system could be improved: more than one beacom at each point would mean more than one possible message, for example. The fires are still prone to bad weather, however, and a false alarm would disable the system for hours. A better idea would be to use heliographs — signalling mirrors — to convey messages in a sort of morse code of flashes. Using the sun during the day, and lamps or magical illuminations during the night, an effective relay network could be devised which would only be stopped by overclouding or fog. The information would travel much faster than a messenger, but could be more expensive remembering the number of trained codesmen involved. Such a system is best suited to a dry, sunny environment, where weather conditions are unlikely to cause problems. A two-mirrored heliograph, using one large concave mirror focusing the sunlight onto a smaller transmitter mirror, would allow signalling even when the sun was behind the signalman.

Alternative technology can provide many strange and diverse methods of communication, some based on existing devices. A large kite, for example, could be flown as a sign; it might even lift a lamp, allowing night signals. A gas or hot-air balloon would also work, without the difficulties of launch and support. Such aerial objects could easily fly strings of flags or pennants in the same manner as ships. Historically, flag messages were the only ship-to-ship communications before the introduction of radio (unless you include shouting!), and were so widely used that an International Flag Code was agreed upon. 'England expects...' was flown on Nelson's flagship Victory using the IFC, and is still flying today.

In his novel *Pavane*, Keith Roberts created a world in which communication is controlled by the Guild of Signallers. The actual method of communication involves large wooden towers like windmills; instead of sails, the towers have two large semaphore arms. The towers are spread across the country in a network, each within telescope range of the next, and messages were relayed from tower to tower until they reach their destination. Torches or lamps are attached to the arms at night or in light fog, and the system is only defeated by heavy fog or driving snow. The semaphore code is meaningless to everyone but the Signallers, who are respected by the common people. An apprentice signalman has to undergo intensive training and pass rigorous tests before he becomes a Guildsman.

It is easy to see that a power that controls all communication will quickly become aware of everything that is going on in the country. Such a power will come to be relied upon for information; imagine what might happen if the power found it beneficial to 'alter' certain messages before they arrived... Consider also what might happen if the power threatened to strike unless demands were met (imagine the effect on our own country if telephone, television, radio and even the Post Office suddenly ceased to function!). The power of communication should not be underestimated.

MAGIC

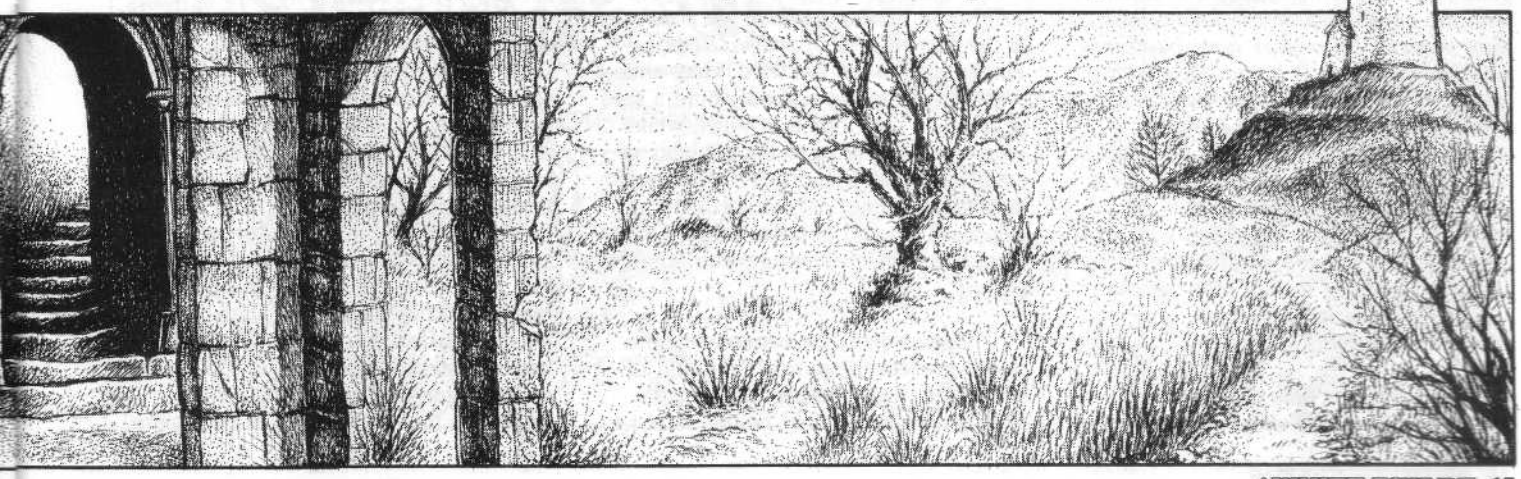
Magic in roleplaying games is almost entirely offensive, or at least geared to combat, proving again the preference of killing to communication. Using such magic for signalling is possible, although it is seldom advantageous when compared with normal means. A fireball could be fired into the air as a signal, but a normal arrow dipped in pitch and set alight would be just as noticeable if fired into the air, and could be used by anybody. Indeed, the Japanese invented an arrow fitted with reeds that whistled as it flew — try finding a spell to improve upon that!

Admittedly, there are some spells that involve seeing into far-away places, or linking minds in a sort of telepathy: these tend to be restricted and hard to obtain, however, in relation to battle-spells. Truly useful spells, such as Animate Broom and *Shield from Rain*, are not even mentioned.

We can consider two types of society in which magic exists: the first accepts magic as true power, and looks upon magic-users as wise men and women; the second treats magic as a subversive influence undermining the law and questioning the rule of normal people, and therefore magic is banned. In both cases, those who use magic would benefit from being able to communicate with others. In the first society, law and order could be upheld through magical means. The ruler of the land, whether advised by wizards or a wizard himself, would know all that went on and would have a fairly easy time governing and controlling. The people would be able to consult local wizards for news and advice, as well as matters such as healing. These local wizards would be informed by their colleagues of approaching danger — a renegade wizard, or pillaging mercenaries, for example — and would be able to prepare for the event; 'forewarned is forearmed'.

It is unlikely that a law will deter magicians from pursing arcane knowledge; the second type of society will probably contain a secret association of wizards, performing their rituals discreetly. Efficient, independent communication would be essential for the survival of such an organisation, not only for the furtherance of research and development but also to warn local branches and individuals of 'Wytchfinder' types. If magical methods of spying and subterfuge were available, the organisation could actually become quite powerful and influential, perhaps even convincing the common people that magic doesn't *really* exist! High-ranking officials would never press charges against suspected sorcerers — the organisation might have 'information' on the officials, and could threaten to reveal it publicly (blackmail is such a nasty word — let us call it 'coercion'...).

It is interesting to note that anyone able to communicate magically with distant places could become renowned for 'predicting' major events, simply because they could see what was happening before the



messenger arrived with the news!

The method of magical communication would vary greatly. The most common would probably be some type of telepathic conversation, with the possibility of 'broadcasts' to all wizards within a certain radius. The problem would always be one of range, but good organisation ought to overcome this by appointing Relayers. Crystal balls would be excellent for telecommunication, allowing sight as well as sound, and most are able to probe areas normally unreachable. Tolkien created the *Palantiri*, magic stones that showed far-away lands: each Palantir allowed its user to converse in thought with other stone-keepers, but required geat willpower to control. When one of them came into the possession of Sauron, the Dark Lord, he was able to see all of Middle-earth, and the other stones corrupted their users or forced them to do Sauron's bidding.

Druids and other Nature-minded spell casters would probably have the most comprehensive communication system; being able to understand the rustling whispers of the trees, to converse with the beasts of the land, and to know the meaning of the song of the birds, must surely make them almost omniscient. What could go on in such times that isn't seen by at least a sparrow? The lowly creatures will at least be aware of what is happening, even if they don't understand it. The sorcerer could even persuade birds to fetch and carry messages. Blackbirds, for example, are often portrayed as spies in myth and fable — perhaps because they are common in many countries. Pigeons have always been good at carrying actual written messages to a known location, and could be used for communication with non-Druids. Again, this is *fantasy*, and fantastic beasts could easily be used as messengers or spies. The greatest advantage of a natural network is that animals have no reason to lie.

A VOICE FROM ABOVE

The nature of religious magic, by its own definition, is not easy to extrapolate from a rational foundation. The fact that priests in roleplaying games are gifted with the power to perform nothing less than miracles introduces some interesting problems: religion is based upon faith, and yet the miracles can be considered proof of the god's existence. Proof destroys such things as faith and belief in the unknown; the acquisition of magical powers makes priesthood seem a material, rather than spiritual, gain. It is probable that the god requires the priest to carry out some task of faith which would not be possible without hypernatural ability.

If the priest is able to obtain magical knowledge from that which is worshipped, it might also be possible to obtain knowledge of more recent matters. The god itself might become a pool of the knowledge of its followers; a priest could acquire knowledge as widespread as the religion itself.

In a more earthly vein, religious magic could draw together all the worshippers for a common goal. This would require communication between different places, with the god joining the minds of various individuals. On a less dramatic scale, communicative devices might occur as part of a temple — a vision in the flames or the waters of a font would work in much the same way as a crystal ball, although the exact nature of the vision might be ambiguous. Some religions might actually value telecommunication between worshippers, so that each temple would be a place of meeting and conversing with followers in all places.

PSIONICS

Many SF writers have considered 'practical psi', using psionic powers for tasks other than combat. Telepathy, for example, could be used as an alternative to radio. Since it has never been proved to exist, it is easy to say that telepathic messages can travel instantaneously, or faster than light at least. The problem with radio is that the transmissions travel at the speed of light, approximately 3 x 10^8 metres/second, which is actually rather slow. A spaceship on the other side of our galaxy would have to wait a very long time for help if it broke down, as the distress signal would take 100,000 years to reach Earth...

The extent of pisonic ability and its profusion will greatly affect the society in which psionic powers exist. A small percentage with such powers will probably find themselves rejected by society, branded 'espers', because the people will not really understand them. Such espers will quickly become aware of others like themselves, and may form an organisation of some sort. Greater numbers of psionically-gifted people will probably result in a social recognition of their powers, and they will hold a definite position in society (such as the Psi-Judges in the Mega-Cities of Judge Dredd). Things start to get awkward when almost everybody is gifted — how would a race of psionics function? In a world where everyone is sensitive to the thoughts of others, a world where there could be no misunderstanding, only peace and compassion could possibly reign. Unless there is a small percentage who aren't psionic...

Using psionics for communication would probably require a Psi Guild of some sort, with branches all over the land. It would certainly be the easiest to use — walk into a local Guild branch, hand over the message to be sent and indicate the destination, and pay the correct money for such a message. The 'psi-gram' is then telepathically sent to the Guild branch nearest the destination, where another Guildsman receives and writes down the message. The message is then delivered by the equivalent of a postman. If there is a limiting range to the telepathy, the message can be relayed from branch to branch. The plausibility of such a Guild will depend upon the rarity of psionic ability: there should be enough telepaths for the talent to be recognised and appreciated, but not so many that the Guild service would be superficial.

It might be possible to psionically teleport letters and parcels to far-away places, but this would be a specialist Guild service for emergency situations as a great deal of risk and concentration is involved. It might be worth the risk, however, if the destination was normally unreachable by messenger (a lighthouse, for example, or a mountain-top observatory) and the client was prepared to pay. Such precarious deliveries are usually welcomed by adventurer-types in any case, especially if you tell them that their task is 'vitally important'...

Before you round up all the psionics you can find and put them to work, consider the pressures on a psionic with total telepathic and telempathic ability constantly active. Every day, he or she will read the hates, fears and worries of those around them; experience the problems and anxieties of anyone who walks past; know the emotions and feelings towards them felt by friend and stranger alike, even those secret feelings in the depths of their psyche. Think of the stresses and tensions that would build up in the psionic's mind.

Now think of that energy being released psionically...

CURSE OR BLESSING?

The advantages of communication are obvious — information becomes available at all levels, knowledge becomes common fact, warnings and advice are efficient and in time, problems are put in perspective — but there are also some disadvantages that aren't clear at first. By opening up the rest of the world, you show people how insignificant they actually are; certain individuals will react to this dangerously, while others won't be able to take it at all. Telecommunications also breeds a species of culture-shock, thrusting together different races and forcing them to co-exist. They may be able to communicate with each other, but will they truly understand the other's radically different beliefs? Think about it — it will affect your game. The slightest misunderstanding can lead to violent war, as the history books confirm, so be careful — this is supposed to be a game!

MERRY CHRISTMAS

from

GAMES WORKSHOP

Who are...

Tony Ackland, Kevin Adams, Paul Anderson, David Andrews, Peter Armstrong ● Stephen Baker, Alan Balderson, Jim Bambra, Kelly Bednall, Jayne Behan, John Blanche, Mary Bosworth, Christine Brooks, Bernice Broome, Donald Brotchie, Steve Bruce, Mike Brunton ● Oliver Campbell, Elizabeth Carson, Paul Castleton, John Chamberlain, Ivor Chomacki, Janette Clay, Tony Clements, Paul Cockburn, Margaret Collishaw, David Cooksey, Anthony Cottrell, Lawrence Cuxon, Mark Craven, Ben Croft ● Ruth Davies, Graeme Davis, Sharon Dean, Colin Dixon ● Dean Edwards, Vaughan Edwards, John Ellard, Richard Ellard, Charles Elliott, Colin Ellis, Anthony Epworth ● Annette Faulkner, Hue Fottrell, Doreen Fox ● Lisa Gale, Phil Gallagher, Ian Garbutt, Marc Gascoigne, Jes Goodwin, Geoff Gossage, Peter Gostelow ● Richard Halliwell, Chris Hannan, Geoffrey Hanson, Chris Harbor, Marcus Harris, Maureen Harrison, Paul Harrison, Simon Harrison, Martin Hassell, Alan Henton, Ian Henzell, Susan Hollingsworth, Graham Holman, Anne Holmes, Richard Holt, David Howard, Andrew Howes, Karl Hulme, Alistair Humphreys, Judith Hurrell ● Isobel Jackson, Steve Jackson, Michaela James, Ruth Jeffery, Jervis Johnson, Maurice Johnson, Steve Johnson, Susan Johnson, Lisa Johnson, Andrew Jones ● Andrew Key, Helen King, Tom Kirby ● Susan Laing, Diane Lane, Richard Latham, Glenn Liddle, Ian Livingstone, Mark Longdon, Malcolm Luff, Christine Luntley ● Mike McKeown, Susan McLoughlin, John Manders, Paula Manders, Freda Mansell, Anne Massing, Barbara Meakin, Alan Merrett, Jackie Milburn, Jackie Miller, Lawrence Miller, Gail Morgan, Colin Morris, Aly Morrison, Trish Morrison, Graham Morton, Evan Moss, Mandy Mullins ● Bob Naismith, Jean Noonan, David Norton ● David Oliver Richard Owen ● Ray Parsons, Lindsay Paton, Andy Atkinson, Carla Paxton, Colin Pegler, Alan Perry, Michael Perry, Michael Pickering, Keith Pinfold, Derrick Plackett, David Platt, Joanne Podoski, Valerie Popjak, Rick Priestley, Catherine Pye ● Stephen Reah, Vera Rhodes, Neil Roberts, Melanie Rogers, Nicholas Russel ● Paul Salt, Darren Scothern, Andrew Simmons, Tony Slocombe, Rita Smith, Susan Smith, Matthew Spiers, Michael Spiers, Jeremy Stables, John Stallard, Andrew Stark, John Steel, Arif Syed, James Syme, Andrew Szczepankiewicz ● Nigel Tate, Karl Tebbutt, Clive Thompson, John Thornthwaite, Neil Toyne ● Joan Ufton ● Ian Varley ● Peggy Watson, Julie Weaving, Andrew Weston, Andrew Wheatley, Tracy Wheatley, Andrew White White, Stephen Williams, Tim Wilson, Lisa Worral, Paula Wright, Richard Wright

and

Bryan Ansell

DUNGEON DOOR
DWARF IN PILLORY
"WHO WILL FACE THE CHAMP?"
CHAOS GOBLIN
THE EMPEROR
IMPERIAL SPACE MARINES
KNIGHT OF THE REIKLAND
THE MESSENGER

Inations

Wil Rees probably has more than a touch of vampire about him. For a start, he admits that his is a terribly Bohemian family. Clue 1. He claims not to know when he was born. It could have been *centuries* ago. Clue 2. Wil prefers to work - or go out - at night and sleep during the day. Clue 3. He '...loves living on the edge, making himself beautiful... loves the macabre...' Clue 4.

Ha. It's obvious. The vampire is an artist. Pass the stake.

Wil works almost exclusively in black and white with rapidograph pens; he considers this more effective than colour, given his intricate style of stippling and cross-hatching. His illustrations often resemble engravings or woodcuts that have been reduced for the final reproduction. In fact, Wil always works to the same size and defies the viewer to take in all the detail. Thanks to the nature of his work, each piece can take up to three days (sorry, nights) to complete.

Wil was influenced by the drawings of Aubrey Beardsley, Albrecht Durer and - of all things - 2000AD, although he has set out to evolve a style which deliberately avoided what he had seen. Giger's work on *Alien* has acted as a catalyst to Wil's drawings, and many elements have crept into his work - look at the minute detailing of the Space Marines in the Rogue Trader illustrations.

Apart from illustrations in *White Dwarf* and *Warlock*, Wil's work has also adorned the likes of Marc Gascoigne's *Titan* from Puffin Books, the *Alternative London* book and a short animated film for Thames Television. Wil's work will also be appearing in one of the first Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay adventures from Games Workshop, *Shadows over Bögenhafen* by Graeme Davis. This last will include full colour work and 20-odd other illustrations. In the new year there will be further opportunities to drool over the quality of Wil's work when Rogue Trader is published - Wil's Marine Captain is a wonderful piece of gothic illustration.

Apart from his more materialistic urges (owning a pink Cadillac and the like), Wil wants to carry on drawing and developing his own style. A long term project is the publication of his own book, 'Dribble and the Sand Pirates', a surreal Alice-in-Wonderland fantasy for children.

And, of course, his work will continue appearing in GW's publications. In the meantime, enjoy these tasty little morsels...

John Blanche

COUNCILLER FRIEDRICH MAGIRIUS

THE ADVENTURE BEGINS

IMPERIAL SPACE MARINE CAPTAIN

CHAOS DEMON

SHADOW

An AD&D adventure for a 8th - 9th level party

Shadowmagic can be played as a one-off adventure, or integrated into an ongoing campaign, as the GM desires. It would be best if the PCs were not predominantly of chaotic alignments, although *Shadowmagic* can be played with lawful or neutral evil PCs. It is primarily an action adventure, but with some tactical twists and pure hack-and-slay merchants will have no problems in finding early graves for their characters. People hoping to run PCs in this adventure should really stop reading this now!

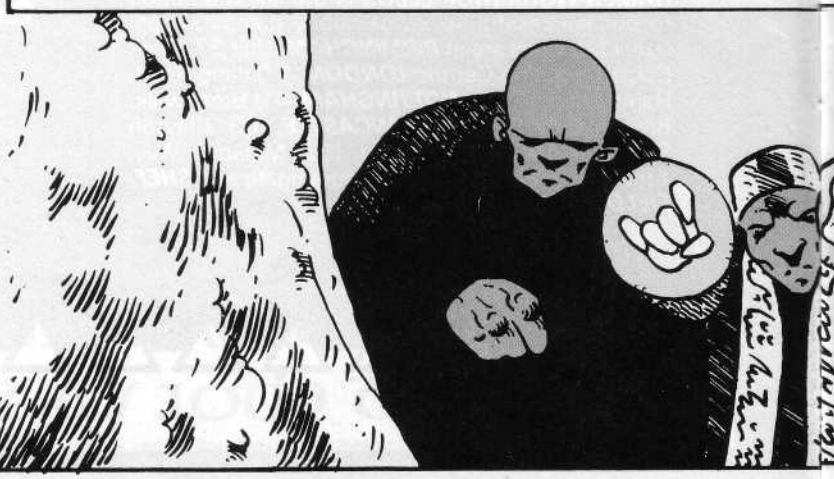
Have the PCs trekking along - nowhere in particular, on some errand perhaps, but not for any reason that puts time pressure on them. They should be in an uncivilized, hilly region. The boxed text below is an introduction that you may read to players to start the adventure off:

> So far, another peaceful day on the road - and then one of you spots something very large circling in the sky to the west, well out of missile or spell range. It hovers about for a while, and then seems to fold its wings and drop almost straight out of the sky. It's amazing how quiet really big things can be sometimes. And then, as you head round a corner, you see a large blue scaly face about a hundred feet away, attached to a long blue scaly neck poking round some rocks.
>
> As the creature opens its mouth, you can hear the electricity crackling in its throat. As you prepare for what is bound to come next, the blue dragon clears its throat... and says 'Err, could I have a word, please?'

You may wish to add minor details to this, of course. If the PCs are on some sort of mount, remember the awe effect of a blue dragon.

Assuming the PCs have the sense not to attack the dragon, conversation can begin. If they do attack it, the relevant statistics are given in **The Expectant Dragon**. The dragon will have already pre-cast all his useful defensive spells. You will need to get the PCs into the caves (and the next section of the adventure) in another manner. For example, you could have some bugbears harass them and then flee towards the caves after sustaining a few casualties.

Parazaine the dragon will not give his name (unless he really has no option) and he is intelligent enough to stay out of range of an *ESP* spell while he talks to the PCs.



MAGIC

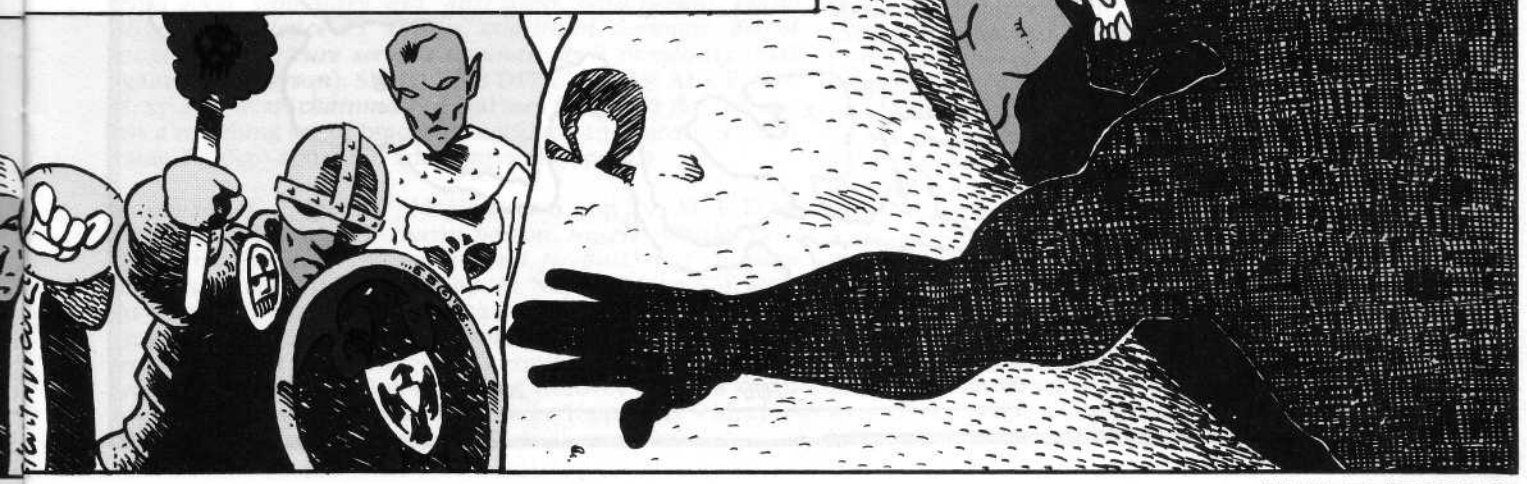
by Carl Sargent

He will ask the PCs for help. About a mile or so to the east there is a nest of bugbears in an old cave system. Vermin, of course, but Parazaine has a problem with them. He hopes to become a proud father shortly, as he has an egg which is not too far from hatching. However, his wife (as it were) has run (flown, actually) off with another blue dragon... Parazaine can't see what she sees in 'it'... but that's dragonesses for you. But the problem is the bugbears. They have sometimes come close to his lair, and Parazaine is afraid that they will steal the egg which he incubating while he is out seeking food. Oh, the shame of a male dragon doing this sort of work... And worse still, the caves are too small for him to get into, so he can't wipe out the bugbears for himself. This is where the PCs come in. If they will go into the caves and deal with the bugbears, Parazaine will reward them with two diamonds from his hoard. If Parazaine is asked where his lair is, he will look reproachfully at the characters and mutter about how all 'I want is a quiet life bring up my hatchling so that I has someone to look after me in my dotage and carry on the family name...'

This is all complete hogwash. Paraziane's lair is scores of miles away, there is no egg and he bullies his poor mate incorrigibly and is a philanderer to boot. The truth is that Parazaine has learned (from an adventurer hors d'ouevres) that, somewhere in the caves, there is an ancient magical - and rather evil - book. And he wants it. He also suspects that there is something nastier in the caves than a mere bunch of bugbears, but he doesn't know anything specific. He hopes that the PCs will go in, find the book, get weakened when they fight whatever is in there and then emerge and give him the book... under the threat of a good electrocuting. Once he has the book, he can enjoy the PCs as an lightning-grilled barbecue. Parazaine is lawful, but being honest with snivelling (demi-)humans is not part of his ethical outlook.

If the PCs agree, Parazaine will take to the air and circle round to observe them entering the caves. If they go elsewhere, he will land and 'persuade' them to go back. Eventually he will threaten them and eventually he will attack. It should not be too tricky to persuade the PCs to enter the caves; a spell-using blue dragon is a very dangerous enemy.

There are bugbears in the caves, and a few other minor 'monsters'. The big wheels, though, are an unholy trinity who are in the miserable position of having the book and realizing that they can't do anything with it, and are therefore in some confusion. It's important to realise what they are, what goals they have and what they are doing.



The first is Zalisyn, a chaotic evil shade cleric. Some time ago, Zalisyn fell into disfavour with his deity, got banished to shadowstuff, and took refuge in some nearby caverns. Recently, his deity permitted him to have spells again and sent him here to find the book and deliver it to a demon. Success in this matter, Zalisyn was told, would ensure a return to favour - in the due course of time. It took some time and effort, but eventually he found the book.

The second of the group is the aforementioned demon. Rhankana is an almost completely mature nabassu, shortly to take up an exalted position in the Abyss. He has been sent to collect the book and take it with him. He has previously been sojourning on the Prime Material Plane, eating humans to grow to maturity, while being 'fostered' in his immature stages by...

...the third member of the trio, an exceptional shadow demon, Namanel. Originally a female human magician, long ago she attempted to evade the attentions of a hostile demon by polymorphing herself into demonic form. It didn't fool the demon, of course, who decided to reward her impudence by completing the process and imprisoning her in the form of a shadow to boot. However, in return for her care of Rhankana, she is to be despatched to the Abyss and granted succubus from. The good news is that she considers that a lot more fun potentially than being a shadow demon. The bad news (for the PCs) is that even in shadow demon form she can still use some of her spells.

Everything would be fine if the book had lived up to expectations. Zalisyn would be human again, Rhankana would be happily bullying demon vassals and Namanel would be getting on with discovering that kissing was even more fun than she remembered. So what went wrong?

Simply this: the book can't be transported away from the Prime Material plane. The orders were to deliver it to the Abyss. Rhankana found that he simply couldn't travel with it. So, the three are worried senseless. All of them have masters of whim and caprice, and failure (or even having to ask for help) could have consequences to awful to think about. After a squabble, they will be settling down to some serious thinking and that's when the PCs will get to them. As to the contents of the book, see **Concluding the Adventure** at the end of the module.

Of course, the PCs will know none of this, but they will certainly know about it when they meet these three. The ensuing combat will be very dangerous and highly challenging. Statistics for these three monsters are boxed and there are suggestions for their tactical co-operation and attack sequences which should help you get the most out of them.

The Caverns

These are limestone caverns of natural origin and are, for the most part, unworked in any major way. The 'floors' have been smoothed and cleaned, but ceilings (between 11-16 feet high) have stalactite formations and stone curtains in places. The various locations in the caverns are unlit unless noted otherwise.

By using the cover of rocks and the like it is possible to get within 20 feet of the cavern entrance without being seen (a rock overhang above the entrance chamber make approach from above very hazardous). Closer the 20 feet, there is a 50% chance of being seen by the bugbears in the entrance chamber, who will fire off crossbow bolts and shout to their fellows. Even if *invisibility* is used there is a 20% chance of being heard sneaking up to the entrance.

1. Entrance Chamber

There are three bugbears on sentry duty. They have some bone dice, a card deck (with a few cards missing), easting utensils, pewter tankards and a barrel of poor ale. Each has 2-20ep and 4-40sp in their belt pouches. There is a 50% chance that the entrance guards are relaxing, giving a 3 in 6 chance of surprising them.

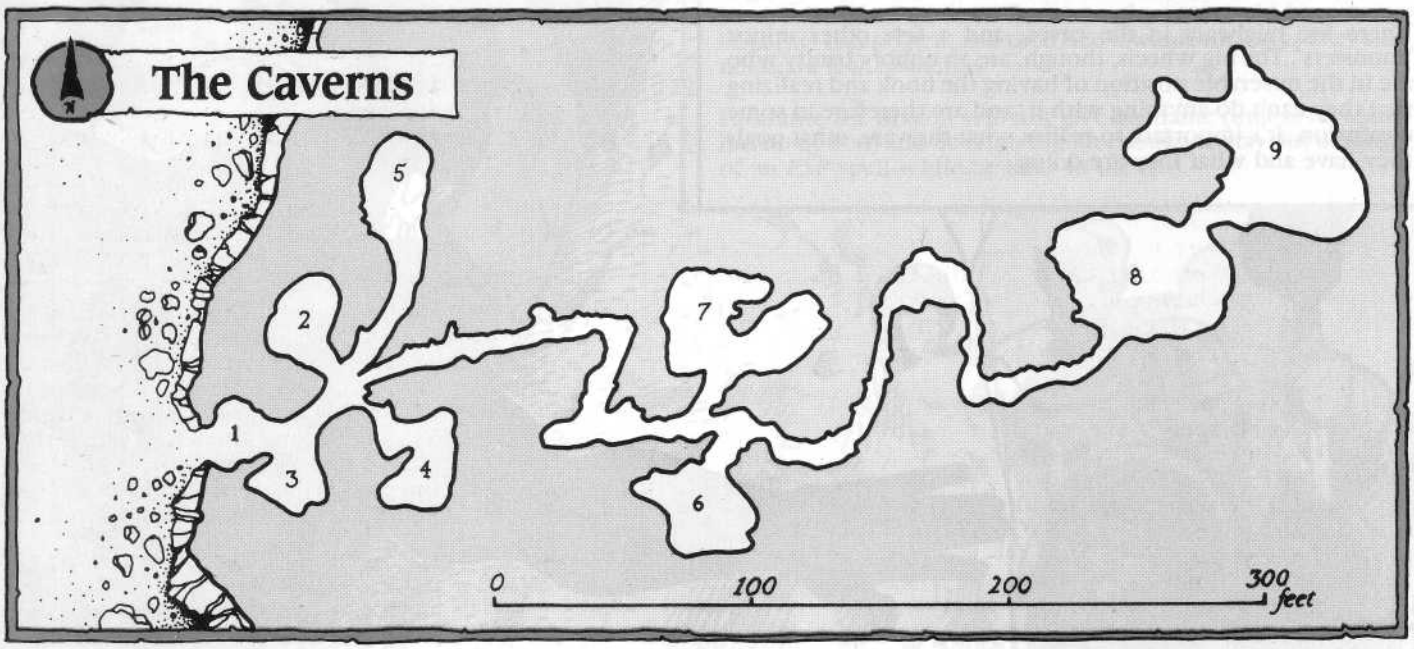
3 bugbears: AC 5; MV 9"; HD 3+1; hp 16 each; AT 1; D by weapon; Int Low; AL CE; Size L; xp 199 each; armed with crossbows (D1-6) and shortswords (D1-6); MMp12.

2-5. Bugbear Chambers

These have some bunk beds with straw and lice-ridden furs, a pile or two of dirty bugbear clothing, a few spare weapons (none of which are magical), foodstuffs, utensils and the like.

All told there are 12 bugbears including a leader, three to a cavern. The bugbears have been recruited (as it were) by Valaan (see below) to keep inquisitive creatures away, and they report to her. They are bored and eager for some action, but if the leader and four or more of the others are killed they will not fancy any more bloodletting. Of those who remain, half will throw down their weapons and surrender and half will fle to area 6 to alert Valaan and seek sanctuary.

11 bugbears: AC 5; MV 9"; HD 3+1; hp 21 (x4), 16 (x4), 12 (x3); AT 1; D by weapon; Int Low; AL CE; Size L; xp 224 (x4), 199 (x4), 183 (x3); five armed with morningstars (D2-8), three with hand axes (D1-6) and three with halberds (D1-10); MMp12.



Bugbear Leader: AC 4; MV 9″; HD 4+1; hp 25; AT 1; D by weapon +2; Int Low; AL CE; Size L; xp 235 each; armed with a bastard sword; MMp12.

Each bugbear has 1-10ep, 3-30 sp and 5-50cp. One has a pair of lapis lazuli worth 10gp each and the leader has a very solid silver bracelet with bloodstone settings worth 390gp. His chamber (cavern 5) also contains a crude wooden coffer with 45gp, 185ep and 300sp and a small trophy - a pair of halfling feet mounted on a wooden shield.

If any captive bugbears are interrogated and asked about any other creatures in the caverns they may (50% of the time, modifiers depend on 'persuasion' used) tell the PCs any of the following: about humans in armour (holding up three fingers) and one human not in armour; that Something Else arrived yesterday, but they were not allowed to see what it was and they were shooed away from the corridors when it (whatever it was) arrived; that they were brought to the caverns as guards by a human who gave them money and showed them some interesting variations of torture techniques; that the bugbears have been here for a week or so; that they have no idea what the humans are doing.

6. The Juniors & 7. The Middle Echelon

The occupants of chambers 6 and 7 may well be alerted by the time the PCs get to them. Escaping bugbears will raise the alarm within 1 round, and noise of combat from the bugbears' chambers have a 15% chance per round (cumulative) of raising the alarm (judicious use of magical *silence* could forestall this, of course). Statistics for the humans found in the chambers are given first, followed by their reasons for being here. These reasons may, in part, be divulged if the PCs can interrogate any prisoners they take.

Mysistal: AC 1; MV 9″; Cleric 3; hp 22; AT 1; D by weapon; SA/SD spells - *darkness* (x2), *endure cold/heat*, *sanctuary*, *aid*, *resist fire*, *spiritual hammer*; S10 I9 W16 D18 C16 Ch10; AL CE; Size M; xp 146; wears chain and is armed with a footman's flail (D2-7); Mysistal also has a gold signet ring with a chrysoprase (340gp), pearl ear-rings (245gp for the pair), and 32gp in her belt pouch.

Roncanni: AC 1; MV 9″; Fighter 7; hp 52; AT 3/2; D by weapon; S18/61 I8 W9 D9 C17 Ch11; AL CN; Size M; xp 766; wears *platemail+2* armed with a *two-handed sword+1* (D 5-14); has a potion of *invulnerability* (-2 to AC, +2 to saves, opponents below 9th level need magic weapons to hit, lasts 5-20 rounds); he has a gold ingot neck pendant (worth 45gp) and 87gp, 12pp and four 50gp gems in his belt pouch.

Chamber 6, where these two can be found, is lit with three oil-burning lanthorns and has two straw beds with wolfskin covers (worth, in total 200gps for the skins) and a small sack containing waterskins, preserved rations, a pouch with 200sp and other, trivial items (hankies, oily rags, iron spikes and the like).

Valaan: AC 0; MV 9″; Cleric 7 ; hp 41; AT 1; D by weapon; SA/SD spells - *bless*, *command*, *cure light wounds*, *protection from good*, *sanctuary*, *aid*, *dust devil*, *hold person*, *know alignment*, *silence 15' radius*, *continual darkness*, *dispel magic*, *prayer*, *cure serious wounds*, *spell immunity* (cast against *hold person*); S16 I11 W18 D17 C15 Ch15; AL CE; Size M; xp 913; wears *chainmail+1* and uses *footman's flail+1*; she has a matching set of bracelets, necklace and ear-rings (total value 1500gp) and 22pp and 43gp in her pouch.

Korovec: AC 7; MV 12″; Magic User 6 ; hp 29; AT 1; D by weapon; SA/SD spells - *charm person*, *magic missile*, *run*, *shield*, *mirror image*, *stinking cloud*, *fireball*, *Melf's minute meteors*; S8 I17 W16 D17 C16 Ch9; AL NE; Size M; xp 574; armed with a quarterstaff (D1-6); has a *wand of magic missiles* (18 charges) and three scrolls - *polymorph self*, *sleep* plus *sepia snake sigil* and *dispel magic*. His ermine trimmed robes are worth 1300gp (if not fireballed etc). Korovec also has seven 50gp gems in various pockets and three 10gp gems with *continual light* cast upon them.

There is a small locked coffer in chamber 7, although otherwise its contents are much the same as the previous cavern. Valaan has the keys in a secret pocket in her right boot. The key must be turned twice in the lock (once to unlock the coffer, once to disarm the trap) to avoid a spring needle in the lid, coated with virulent poison (save vs poison at -2 or die). The coffer holds two potions of *extra-healing*, a scroll of *cure disease*, a bag of 215pp and a quiver of 24 arrows. 11 of these are *arrows+1* and one is an *arrow of direction*.

The tactical actions of these NPCs depend on the amount of warning that they get (if any). Their protective actions, prior to combat, will be: Mysistal - *aid*, *endure heat/cold* and lastly *sanctuary*; Roncanni - guzzle the potion and emerge into the corridor; Valaan - *spell immunity*, *protection from good*, *aid*, *prayer* and finally *bless*; Korovec - *shield* and *mirror image*. These spell casting sequences may be cut short if the PCs advance quickly. In any fighting Valaan and Korovec will keep out of melee if possible and use their spells to best effect. Korovec likes trapping enemies in a *stinking cloud* and then using a *fireball* on the helpless victims. This disperses the cloud, but it's fun. He will fire the *minute meteors* one per round at spell casters.

The group will not flee further into the caverns, but Korovec may try to escape. He will offer his surrender if cornered, but the others will try to fight to the bitter end; the clerics are fanatics while Roncanni will do so because it is a matter of honour and he's a bit dim.

Mysistal is a junior cleric in Valaan's service. Valaan was instructed to come here by her superiors '...to assist a senior cleric. Here's an arrow of direction, now get going... Oh, and take a magician with you - someone competent but not too powerful...' Korovec got the job and brought his bodyguard Roncanni (who is *charmed* into service) for protection and a bit more bargaining power. Korovec is now prepared to stay here because his spell book was appropriated on arrival. Korovec was told that a magician might be needed to decode some magical writings and that the pay was good. He knows little more than that, other than Valaan has some superiors further in the cave - and that tomorrow something is happening. Roncanni and Mysistal know (if it is possible) even less.

Valaan knows about Zalisyn and that he has company, although she doesn't know what this company might be - the nabassu arrived wrapped in a heavy cloak, and the shadow demon slipped past her in the shadows. She does know that an argument

has been raging further into the caverns because she has been eavesdropping. She heard Zalisyn roar 'I feel like killing something... We'll think about this tomorrow. I can pray for some more divinations I suppose...' and slipped away. The 'I feel like killing something...' was translated as 'Whatever you do, don't go down there...' for the others.

Interrogation will reveal to the PCs that there are further enemies deeper in the caverns, and that rest, memorizing spells and pressing on next day is possible. They should be encouraged in this, as the creatures that await are very tough. Korovec (or even Roncanni) will point out that Valaan was very afraid of whatever was down there, offering this in the hope of receiving merciful treatment. Korovec will neither fight for nor accompany the PCs further into the caves, but Roncanni could be *charmed* again and relied on in a fight, as he is a man of honour.

8. & 9. Caverns of the Shadows

These caverns are lit with torches and lanthorns which cast flickering shadows everywhere, optimising Zalisyn's and Namanel's powers. The caves are smooth-walled and smooth-floored - the natural caverns have been worked on here. The only crucial item in these caverns is a small coffer in cavern 9 (see below).

Initially, Zalisyn will be pacing up and down in area 8, while the demons are discussing the probelms of being on the wrong end of Abyss politics in the next chamber. If the PCs make their move at night Zalysin and Rhankan will be asleep in area 9 while Namanel will be lurking at the junction of the two chambers. She will awaken the others at once if the PCs do intrude.

These three are in a desperate mess and will fight to the death. Escape means failure and failure means death anyway (or worse). The key to this battle is the light level. Bright lights *must* be extinguished if Zalisyn and Namanel are not to be severely weakened. All three have light reducing powers: Namanel can create *darkness 10' radius*, Rhankana can *create shadows*, and Zalisyn has *darkness*, *continual darkness* and *dispel magic* available (the last for countering *light* or *continual light* spells). You must keep a careful track of changes in AC, hp, to hit rolls and the like for Zalisyn and Namanel. For Zalisyn, a *light* spell creates average lighting conditions and a *continual light* creates bright light conditions. Lanterns give average light in their immediate area, while bullseye lanterns create a ray of bright light 30 feet long.

Zalisyn, Namanel and Rhankana will collect in area 9 and try to buy themselves soem time. Thus, a *continual darkness*, *darkness 10' radius* or (even better) Namanel's *web* will be used to delay the PCs. Zalisyn will try to cast key defensive spells: *prayer*, *protection from good 10' radius*, *resist fire*, *resist cold* and *spell immunity* (cast against *magic missile*). The first two are the most important. If given the luxury of time, *true seeing* will also be used. He will also wish to coat his mace with *oil of impact*. Zalisyn also has the option of creating a further delay with his *conjured animals*. Namanel will cast *shield* and *mirror image*. The nabassu will be the first to get in close, while trying to stay within 20 feet of the others.

Zalisyn will try to use distance attacks (*flame strike* etc) before entering combat with his mace. If in trouble, he will try his touch spells - the *bestow curse* will be used to *slow* his opponent so that he can get away. He will try to get clear of a melee before casting his *heal* spell if this is at all possible.

Namanel will use all useful spells (*lightning bolt*, *magic missile* etc) before melee and prior to that she will cast a *fear 30' radius* at the rear of the PC group to catch any straglers before taking a flying leap into the fray.

Rhankana will use his ring charges, trying to kill a strong fighter by physical damage, before using his *death stealing/bestowing* stratagem.

This should be - and is - a dangerous and challenging combat. You should rule that stolen death that the PCs don't know about will not occur in a later adventure if Rhankana is killed here. Assuming the PCs make it, there is the treasure on the three and the coffer, hidden behind a loose pile of rocks against the

Namanel the Shadow Demon
AC 9 (bright light), 5 (torchlight) or 1 (darkness); MV 12" (30" leap); HD 7+3; hp 51; AT 3; D 1-6/1-6/1-8; SA/SD see below; MR std; Int Very High; AL CE; Size M; xp 1610.

Special Attacks: In an initial flying leap Namanel can use four claw attacks (D 1-6 each) but no bite. Once per day she may use *darkness 10' radius* and *fear 30' radius*. She will not use her *magic jar* attack. Also see spell use below.

Special Defences: Namanel is turned as a 'special'. In gloom or darkness she takes half-damage from attacks, in bright light double damage. She is immune to fire, cold, and electrical attacks, but a *light* or *continual light* spell cast at her causes 1-6 points of damage per level of the spellcaster.

Melee Bonuses: Namanel is +1 to hit in torchlight, +2 in darkness.

Spell Use: Namanel can use the following spells once per day as a 7th level MU - *magic missile* (x2), *read magic*, *shield*, *mirror image* (x2), *web*, *dispel magic*, *lightning bolt* and *wizard eye*.

Rhankana the Nabassu
AC -3; MV 15"/15"; HD 5+17; hp 55; AT 3; D 2-8/2-8/3-12; SA/SD see below; MR 40%; Int High; AL CE; Size M; xp 4040.

Special Attacks: Rhankana can, at will, *create shadows* (20 foot radius) and create *darkness* (5 foot radius). 17 times per day (honestly!) he can use *death stealing*. A victim within 20 feet must save vs death magic or become a ghast in Rhankana's service when slain, and a stolen death can be bestowed on a second victim within 10 feet who must save vs death magic or be slain at once, becoming a shadow in Rhankana's service (*exorcism* prevents this if cast at the corpse). Rhankana may *energy drain*, cause *paralyzation* in a 10 foot radius and use *silence 10' radius* once per day. As if that wasn't enough, Rhankana also wears a *ring of shocking grasp* (33 charges), usable 3 times per turn. A successful hit by the hand wearing the ring inflicts an additional 7-14 points of electrical damage.

Special Defences: Iron or magic weapons are needed to hit. Rhankana can *regenerate* up to 20 hit points of damage per day, *teleport* (apparently at will) and become *ethereal* twice per day. He can use a *vampiric attack* once per day; any single attack will not affect Rhankana but will affect his attacker instead. This only applies to attacks specifically directed against Rhankana, not to an area spell which isn't directly targetted on him. Rhankana also has standard demonic defences: maximum half damage from acid, cold, fire and electrical attacks.

Treasures: Around his neck, Rhankana wears a platinum neck chain (worth 6,500gp) and silver arm bracers in the shape of serpents with small emeralds for eyes (worth 2,500gp each).

eastern wall of area 9. It is unlocked. However, before giving its contents, it is worth noting that the if the PCs flee they won't be chased beyond the caverns. The three creatures will remain in the caverns for the remainder of the game day, but will be gone if the PCs return after this time. And, of course, Parazaine will be waiting - but more of him shortly...

The unlocked coffer conatins two books. One, a slim leather-bound volume, is Korovec's travelling spell book (which contains details of all his memorized spells as well as *comprehend languages* and *read magic*).

The other is a large tome, some 18″ x 12″ x 2″, which is a daemonology - a study and account of daemons. One section, written in Common, details certain aspects of life and politics in depressing regions like the Glooms of Hades, Taterus and Gehenna; another gives the true names of two daemons (your choice as to which two); the final section consists of bound-in scrolls with amended versions of ***banishment***, ***binding***, ***dolor***, ***ensnarement***, and ***torment***. These variants affect only NE creatures, but all saves by the same will be at -2 exclusive of other bonuses or penalties. The demons considered (rightly) that this book would be useful in forcing alliances with daemons should this prove to be required. The book, however, cannot be transported away from the Prime Material Plane by any means. The book is worth 12,500xp and 40,000gp. Even when the PCs have the book there is one last problem...

The Expectant Dragon

If the PCs are fleeing in obvious disarray or defeat, Parazaine (who will be some 120 feet away from the cave entrance) will check them out with *ESP* and, if he picks up nothing about the book, will be happy with a single arc-grilled PC (the biggest one).

If they emerge intact, he will use *ESP* and ask them such questions such as 'Long time over a few bugbears, weren't you?' and 'Find anything else, did you?'. If his *ESP* informs him as to who has the book, he will know who not to breathe on. If he can't find out about the book his questions will grow increasingly threatening, and eventually he will attack anyway out of sheer frustration. He will breathe once, get airborne, cast his defensive spells, swoop and breathe twice more, and then - having got all the advantages he can - he will land and fight.

Parazaine, a very old spell-using blue dragon: AC 2; MV 9″/24″; HD 9; hp 63; AT 3; D 1-6/1-6/3-24; SA spells - ***magic missile, read magic, shield, ESP, mirror image, stinking cloud, protection from good 10′ radius***, breath weapon; SD saves as 16HD monster, detects invisible within 70′; MR standard; Int Very; AL LE; Size L; 3,056xp.

Give the PCs a chance. Parazaine can be stalled and drawn (initially) into negotiations. Smart moves like spreading out when talking to the dragon will not alert him that anything untoward is
being considered, but use of defensive and protective spells will be frowned upon. Parazaine will give the PCs only one warning in a case like that.

Zalisyn the Shade Cleric - 'human' male, 14th level

	Complete Darkness	Night-time Darkness	Shadowy Torchlight	Average Light	Bright Light
Str	17	18	18/10	16	15
Int	14	15	16	13	12
Wis	18	19	20	17	16
Dex	17	18	19	16	15
Con	16	17	18	15	14
Cha	12	13	14	11	10
AC	-3	-4	-4	-2	-1
MV	12″	12″	12″	12″	12″
THACO*	11	11	11	12	12
hp	70	70	79	61	52
MR	60%	60%	60%	60%	0%**

AL CE; xp 5210.

* THACO is 'To Hit AC 0'. Add the actual AC of the target to this number for Zalisyn's required to hit roll. THACO includes no magical bonuses, so with mace and magical oil THACO=8 (9). Damage is 3-8 with a *footman's mace+1* (4-9 when Str17, 5-10 when Str18, and 6-11 when Str18/10; add +6 to all damage when magical oil is used - see below).

** Standard magic resistance, with a -4 penalty to saves. Note +2 to +5 wisdom and +1 to +4 dexterity bonuses to saves.

Magic Items: *platemail+1, ring of protection+2, footman's mace+1*, vial with two applications of *oil of impact* (makes blunt weapons +3 to hit/+6 damage for 9-12 rounds), potions of *extra-healing* and *bugbear control*, four scrolls with *dispel good, protection from gas, cure critical wounds* and *continual darkness* plus *bestow curse*.

Spells: *command, cure light wounds, darkness* (x2), *protection from good, fear touch, resist cold, aid, hold person, resist fire, silence 15′ radius* (x2), *spiritual hammer, wyvern watch, continual darkness* (x2), *dispel magic* (x2), *prayer, bestow curse* (x2), *cloak of fear, cure serious wounds* (x2), *poison touch, protection from good 10′ radius, spell immunity, dispel good, flame strike, true seeing, conjure animals, heal*.

Additional Special Ability: *shadow images* (in shadowy settings only), creating 2-5 shadow duplicates with no offensive powers. These can only be dispelled by altering the lighting conditions.

Non-magical Treasure: Zalisyn wears an exquisite gold neck chain set with turquoise and an emerald (worth 5750gp), a snakeskin belt with silver buckles (worth 150gp), a belt pouch with three aquamarines (value 500gp each) and 32pp in it and, on one finger, a plain gold ring with a single black sapphire worth 5400gp.

Zalisyn's Conjured Animals - 2 Giant Boars: AC 6; MV 12″; HD 7; hp 30, 28; AT 1; D 3-18; SA fight for 1-4 rounds at up to -10 hit points, die at once at -11; Int Animal; AL N; Size L; xp 465, 449; MMp11.

Concluding the Adventure

The PCs won't be able to find Parazaine's lair. It is more than 75 miles away, and tracking a flying dragon is less than easy. However, sequels and spin-offs are there in profusion. Other clerics from Zalisyn's and Valaan's cult (purposefully not named) might come after the PCs. Rhankana's mum, a Type V demon with a horrible temper, who happens to be a firm gastronome of the infant-cookery school, might drop by with a casual invitation for the PCs to sample the delights of involuntary disembowelment. Eventually, one or two daemons might take an interest in the book and its owners, especially those who have read the middle bit with the names... If you want to set up a longer sequence of adventure pitting your PCs against daemons, demons and their earthly servants, then this short adventure will set things up nicely... though perhaps not so nicely for the poor PCs...

THE EXAMINATION

Christmas Silliness by Marcus L. Rowland

At present, roleplaying games have a dubious academic reputation. Many teachers consider them either a waste of time, or an amusing spare-time activity for clubs and societies. At one time science fiction and fantasy novels had a similar status, but recent years have seen works in these genres creep into the examination syllabus.

Activating our crystal ball, we can dimly see a future where RPG's are taught in schools, and look at the examination papers covering this difficult and demanding topic.

Note: The examination papers following are for amusement ***only****. This is not a competition, and we do not intend to mark any answers that are sent in!*

As far as possible, the difficulty level is roughly equivalent to an O-Level/GCSE examination. All questions in paper 1 require either general knowledge of RPGs, or some detailed knowledge of one or more specific games. Papers 2 and 3 are explained in outline form only, and should be moderated by a GM who will need to fill in more details for whatever game system is preferred.

GM's Notes: How to run Paper 2.

Choose one of the situations outlined below, or develop one more in keeping with the details and rules of your campaign. Begin the interrogation fairly gently, then start to interrupt the victims, pick holes in their stories, and browbeat them. Grade players on the following basis:

Plausibility	Rating 0-10
Speed	Deduct 1 point per five seconds wasted from an initial score of 10
Consistency	Deduct 1 point for each contradiction or obvious error from an initial score of 10
Role Playing	Are the responses boring or amusing? Does the player assume the accents and speech patterns that would be used by the character being played? Rating 0-10
General	Up to 10 points are left for anything that seems to be rewarding, eg. confusing the GM so much that a question is forgotten, making the GM laugh uncontrollably, etc.

It may be advisable to prepare a different test for each player, or keep players separated during this phase of the examination.

GM's Notes: How to run Paper 3.

Choose a roleplaying adventure you have not run, and identify the main objectives of the scenario. Adventures which suggest experience point objectives for players are particularly suitable for this examination. For example, most D&D/AD&D adventures, most Paranoia adventures. Adventures which allow players to use and improve skills (RuneQuest etc) are also suitable. Run the adventure, grading each player on the following basis:

Combat Strategy	Rating 0 (blunders) to 10 (brilliant manoeuvres).
Powers/Skills	Rating 0 (wastes abilities) to 10 (utilises every aspect of the character).
Speed	Deduct 1 point per minute wasted from an initial score of 10 (NB: Time spent in 'Time Out' pauses should not be counted).
Role Playing	Does the player assume the accents and speech patters that would be used by the character being played? Are all actions 'in character' with the personality portrayed? Rating 0-10.
Objectives	Rate each character for contributions to the main objectives of the adventure, from 0 (didn't accomplish anything) to 10 (did everything, other players did nothing). Deduct marks from players who harm or obstruct each other unnecessarily.

Final Marking

When all three sections of the examination are complete, add the total marks and divide by two to give a final percentage. Results should be graded on the following basis:

0-26 F	Fail	6
26-40 E	Pass (just)	5
41-50 D	Pass (poor)	4
51-55 C	Pass (adequate)	3
56-55 C	Pass (Good)	2
76-00 A	Distinction	1

MISKATONIC UNIVERSITY

EXAMINATION BOARD

MUB/RPG/001-2-3

LEVEL 1 EXAMINATION — ROLE PLAYING GAMES

This is to certify that _____ *has achieved the following grades in this examination:*

Paper 1 (Theory)	_____	/100
Paper 2 (Oral)	_____	/50
Paper 3 (Practical)	_____	/50

Overall Mark	_____	/200
Percentage Mark	_____	%
Grade	_____	Fail/Pass/Distinction

Signed _____ (Examiner)

Date _____

Situation 3 (SF)

You have been paid 500,000 credits to take the place of a murderer who was to be exiled to a prison planet. The disguise includes plastic surgery, fingerprint modification, and other forms of medical disguise. The sentence has now been changed to execution; convince the guards that you deserve to live. You don't have the money on your person, and have no contact with the minder who's holding it for you. He won't give the money to anyone except you. You have no proof of your true identity.

GM Notes: Possibilities include a promised bribe, informing on other prisoners, or a jailbreak. The guards will use lie detectors to verify anything the prisoner says.

Situation 4 (Superhero Games)

You have just seen two supervillains rob a post office, and have rushed into a phone box to change into your secret identity. Now that you're inside you can see that the interior of the box is much bigger than the exterior. An odd-looking stranger is pressing buttons on an elaborate hexagonal control panel, and the entire box is lurching and vibrating. A TV screen shows the Earth receding into the distance. Evidently you've stumbled into some sort of alien spacecraft. Persuade the alien to return you to Earth without revealing your secret identity!

GM Notes: This can be as difficult or easy as you like. If the NPC is based on Dr. Who there is no easy way of persuading the TARDIS to return to Earth immediately. It is assumed that the superhero has no powers or skills relevant to this situation, other than combat powers.

MUEB/RPG/003

MISKATONIC UNIVERSITY EXAMINATION BOARD
LEVEL 1 EXAMINATION — ROLEPLAYING GAMES
PAPER 3 — PRACTICAL — TIME INDEFINITE

Your GM will run an adventure, grading candidates for ingenuity, effective use of powers or skills, strategy, response speed, roleplaying, etc.

50 Marks

MUEB/RPG/001

MISKATONIC UNIVERSITY EXAMINATION BOARD
LEVEL 1 EXAMINATION — ROLE PLAYING GAMES
PAPER 1 — THEORY — 2 HOURS

Answer ALL questions in section A
Answer TWO questions in section B

Section A

Answer all questions, explaining your answers and drawing diagrams where appropriate.

1. Most RPGs make use of abbreviations made up of the initial letters of a phrase, or contractions of longer words. Some are specific to a single game, others are generic and used in many games. For example:

NPC = Non Player Character	Generic
ACR = Advanced Combat Rifle	Traveller

Give the full wording and sources of the following:

MONDO	IISS	DMG	POW	HTK
JOT	SFRPG	ECV	GM	END

(10 marks)

2. Name and briefly describe TWO lifeforms found in each of the following environments:
(i) The astral plane
(ii) Vacuum worlds
(iii) R'lyeh
(iv) Deep space
(v) Post-holocaust America

(10 marks)

3. Draw a labelled map of ONE of the following areas:
(i) Midville USA
(ii) The Spinward Main
(iii) Middle-earth
(iv) Glorantha
(v) The World of Greyhawk

(10 marks)

4. Compare and contrast the civil and military policies of TWO of the following powers:
(i) The Imperium
(ii) Melniboné
(iii) The United Federation of Planets
(iv) The Lunar Empire
(v) Mega-City One

(10 marks)

5. Give THREE advantages and THREE disadvantages of traps based on:
(i) Projectiles
(ii) Deadfalls
(iii) Poison

Draw an annotated diagram of a NEW trap using ALL of these attack forms.

(10 marks)

6. Explain the meaning of ALL of the following terms:
   (i) TISA Drive
   (ii) Borrowed Mistletoe
   (iii) Battle Magic
   (iv) Bootlegger Turn
   (v) Dependent NPC (10 marks)

Section B

Answer TWO of the following questions.

7. Imperial Navy planners are divided on the relative merits of Battleships (large military starships with their own interstellar drives) and Battle Riders (large military ships without interstellar drives, transported by a larger carrier starship).
   (i) Describe the arguments on each side. (5 marks)
   (ii) Discuss, with historical examples, the relative merits of each design in:
   (a) A war of attrition fought on a broad front.
   (b) Gunboat diplomacy. (10 marks)
   (iii) Are the Close Escort and the System Defence Boat smaller equivalents of these craft? Explain your conclusions. (5 marks)

8. Most superheroes find it necessary to adopt a secret identity, but still require some positive means of identification (a recognizable uniform, insignia, etc.)
   (i) Describe the arguments for and against the use of secret identities. Give examples. (10 marks)
   (ii) Would a secret identity compromise the use of a superhero's evidence in court? Suggest legal methods of overcoming this problem. (5 marks)
   (iii) Is the use of secret identities likely to lead to schizophrenia? Give examples. (5 marks)

9. Give a detailed account of the history, structure, purpose, rituals and other activities of ONE of the following organisations:
   (i) The Red Redemption
   (ii) The Hermetic Order of the Silver Twilight
   (iii) Vivamort (20 marks)

10. (a) Outline THREE ecological benefits resulting from the presence of each of the following species:
   (i) Bulette (Land Shark)
   (ii) Red Dragon (Draco Confligratio Horribilis)
   (iii) Carrion Crawler (10 marks)

   (b) An area supports several thousand healthy deer and 6 Rocs. There are no other predators. Discuss the short-term and long-term effects of the destruction of the Rocs. (10 marks)

11. (a) Give an account of the use of computers in TWO of the following activities:
   (i) FTL spacecraft operations
   (ii) Autoduelling
   (iii) Counter espionage
   (iv) Superhero base security
   (v) White-collar crime (10 marks)

   (b) A starship computer must be programmed to guard the ship while the crew investigate the planets they visit. Using no more than 300 words, outline (in English) the instructions to be included in the progam. Draw a flowchart of the way the program should operate. (10 marks)

12. Write an essay one ONE of the following topics:
   (i) Zen and the Art of Starship Maintenance
   (ii) Blade weapons in an interstellar society
   (iii) Techniques for divination
   (iv) Organised crime in Mega-City One
   (v) Notable cult sites of:
   the Indian subcontinent OR
   Australia OR
   Indo-China (20 marks)

Section A total 60 marks
Section B total 40 marks
Total 100 marks

MUEB/RPG/002

MISKATONIC UNIVERSITY EXAMINATION BOARD LEVEL 1 EXAMINATION — ROLEPLAYING GAMES

PAPER 2 — ORAL — 10 MINUTES

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATE: *Your GM will hand you a slip of paper outlining a situation. You will be given a minute to read the paper and decide how you will respond to the situation it describes, then the GM will ask you several questions. You will be graded for plausibility, response speed, consistency, role playing, etc.*

50 Marks

Situation 1 (Modern and SF RPGs)

Your character is standing a metre from a ground-zero thermonuclear explosion. All clones, magical replicas, dopplegangers, etc have been destroyed. Explain why you're not really dead.

GM Notes: Any moderately plausible explanation is acceptable, particularly one involving freak rifts in the space-time continuum, sudden acquisition of teleportation ability or super-powers, etc. However, the examinee must justify all loose ends.

Situation 2 (Fantasy)

You, the Paladin Brian, are infiltrating the local Assassins' guild disguised as a first-level cut-throat. Unfortunately you have been selected for an important mission, the murder of your religious superior. Find a way of avoiding the assignment and/or preventing anyone else fron undertaking it *without blowing your cover.*

GM Notes: Any means of preventing the assassination is acceptable; for example, taking the assignment, persuading the religious superior to go into hiding until the mission is accomplished, then returning with simulated proof of the death. Allow the assassins all normal means of verifying the truth.

WOLVES OF·THE·SEA

Seaborne Adventure in Roleplaying Games

by Graeme Davis

The word 'pirate' often conjures up images of Blackbeard, Captain Kidd and Errol Flynn, but in fact piracy and adventure on the high seas have been around for a long time, both in history and legend. The Greek legend of the Odyssey, for example, dates back to the time of the Trojan War (thought to be around 1400 BC), and the legend of Jason and the Argonauts, and of Sinbad, may go back even earlier.

Pirates ruled the Mediterranean until the expanding Roman Empire suppressed them — Julius Caesar himself was captured and ransomed in 78 BC by pirates working the Greek coast, and in 67 BC Caesar's colleague and rival Pompey was given the job of clearing the Mediterranean of pirates. The scale of the problem is indicated by the size of the force he was given — a fleet of 270 ships and 100,000 legionary infantry. Despite Pompey, piracy continued throughout Europe's history. Towards the end of the Roman period, the first Saxons to arrive in Britain were raiders from the north German coast. Some decided to settle, and the rest is history. In their turn, the Saxons were troubled by piratical raiders in the form of the Vikings.

The golden age of piracy, of course, was in the 16th and 17th centuries. There are names like Henry Morgan, Francis Drake, William Kidd and many others who preyed upon Spanish (and later, British) interests in the Caribbean and elsewhere.

Piracy also exists on many a fantasy world. In Middle-earth there are the Corsairs of Umbar, for example, while both Conan and Elric sailed with pirates on various occasions. Ursula le Guin's world of Earthsea and the world of Patricia MacKillip's *Starbearer* books are both large archipelagos, with extensive seas separating a large number of small islands.

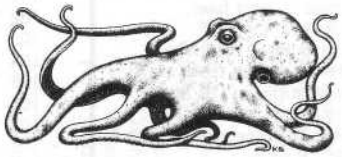
Everybody has their own idea of what constitutes a good pirate or seaborne action story. Here are a few piratical activities, which might provide ideas for roleplaying campaigns.

Raiding: On land or sea, this is the activity most popularly associated with pirates. They will tend to cluster around trade routes, where they are assured of a steady supply of merchantmen, and regular shipments of valuable cargoes, like the gold fleets of the Spanish Main, are particularly popular. Large pirate fleets may evolve as the raiders co-operate in order to overcome any escort vessels. Land raiding is less frequent, but not unknown, especially if it brings a high return.

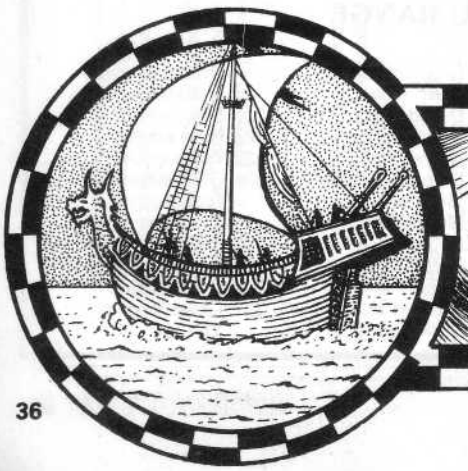
Treasure: Legends of buried pirate treasure have persisted for centuries, and people are still looking even today. A great many stories are probably empty legend, but there seems no doubt that some pirates did hide caches of treasure to avoid being caught with it, and some undoubtedly did not come back to reclaim their booty. In any case, treasure maps and buried hoards form the backbone of many a pirate story, and have become as much the pirate's trademark as the Jolly Roger.

War: Many nations have made use of pirates in war, and indeed many pirates, like brigands on land, started out as mercenaries who found themselves unemployed. Golden Age pirates could sign on as privateers by obtaining *Letters of Marque* from a local governor. These documents meant that the pirates were allowed to call themselves privateers, and were authorised by the power issuing the Letters of Marque to attack and sink or capture any vessels of powers hostile to the issuing power. A certain percentage of each prize went to the issuing government — this was specified in the document, and was usually about 15%. Privateers were welcome in any port controlled by the issuing power, and in some cases a pirate who became a privateer may have earned an amnesty from that government. If any 'friendly' vessels were attacked by a pirate operating under Letters of Marque, the agreement was void and all amnesties were repealed. Sometimes pirates or privateers could be sent on missions for a government which could not be undertaken openly by naval forces.

Exploration: Sir Francis Drake, who was by turns a pirate, admiral and national hero, circumnavigated the globe in 1577-8, and the legendary Arab merchant captain Sinbad was also a great explorer. Many voyages of exploration and discovery were undertaken in the effort to secure new trade and rare commodities, and wherever the merchants went, pirates invariably followed. Large mercantile operations like the East India Company sometimes had their own militia and warships, and acted very much like a colonising power in the areas that they opened up for trade. They were often the only source of law and order in these areas, far removed from colonial governments.



Smuggling: Towards the end of the historical Golden Age of Piracy, another group of seaborne criminals became popular folk heroes. Using light, fast ships to elude the Revenue cutters, smugglers brought wine, spirits and other valuable contraband to England from the Continent. Practically any cargo which carries a high import duty can be smuggled at a profit, and in time of war smugglers' experience and overseas contacts can make them very valuable for transporting spies and other covert operations.



Wrecking: While not directly connected with piracy, wreckers preyed on much the same victims. Along many stretches of coast line where there were dangerous rocks and shoals, groups of wreckers operated in foul weather, lighting false beacons to lure ships to their doom. Once the ship had struck the rocks and the crew had abandoned ship, the wreckers moved in to plunder its cargo.

Danger Afloat

As well as providing the referee with a range of new possibilities for adventure plots, the sea also has its own unique hazards:

Battle: Battles at sea are quite different from those on land. It is more difficult for individual combatants to run away, for one thing, and casualties tend to be higher. When a ship is sunk, a high proportion of the crew is usually killed — those who don't go down with the ship have a good chance of drowning or being eaten by sharks, and survivors are usually at the mercy of the victors. In addition to enemy missiles and boarding parties, there were dangers from falling timbers and rigging, and armour was hardly ever worn in sea battles — the risk of being dragged underwater and drowned by the weight of one's armour did not justify the extra protection it may have given — those *Rings of Water Walking* can come in handy here! Comparatively few of those who died in sea battles were killed by enemy snipers or boarding parties.

Disease: On long voyages, it was impractical for ships to carry adequate supplies of fresh fruit and vegetables, and the resulting vitamin C deficiency made scurvy a common condition among ships' crews. Tropical diseases were more dangerous, however — with the science of medicine still in its infancy in the 16th and 17th centuries, European sailors were easy victims to diseases like malaria, yellow fever and smallpox, which could wipe out an entire crew in the cramped shipboard living conditions. On a more trivial level, a cruel referee might require landlubbers to make a constitution check or some other saving roll on their first sea voyage, a serious failure indicating that they suffer acutely from seasickness and will not be working (or fighting) at maximum efficiency during the voyage.

Fire: Fire on board a wooden ship was the danger most feared by seafarers anywhere. Smoking a pipe not fitted with a spark-preventing cap, or any other conduct likely to constitute a fire risk, was often punishable by death, and if a ship caught fire in battle it was usually out of the fight. Some naval commanders used fire-ships — uncrewed vessels set alight and sent towards the enemy — to upset opposing navel formations.

Weather: Nearly every adventure-at-sea film features one really big storm, with timbers crashing to the deck and crewmen being washed overboard. The weather was probably the greatest enemy of the sailing ships and their crews — a severe storm or gale could destroy a ship and its crew, while a becalmed sailing ship could not move, and its crew could only pray that a wind would pick up before the supplies ran out and they starved.

Hazards to Navigation: Weather is not the only natural hazard to shipping, especially in shallow coastal waters. Rocks and shoals can rip the bottom out of a ship, and sandbanks can leave her stranded. Unforseen strong currents or rip-tides can force a ship off-course and onto rocks or reefs. Wreckers frequently make use of an area full of natural hazards.

Fantastic Hazards: In a fantasy rpg, even more hazards can be added to the dangers of long sea voyages. Aquatic monsters are the most obvious — giant squid or similar monsters can destroy whole vessels in a single encounter, while smaller marine beings can be just as dangerous, possibly boarding a ship and overpowering the watch at night, or holing a ship below the waterline to drag it and its crew down to their lair. Other fantastic hazards might include the clashing rocks encountered by Jason and the Argonauts, or the deadly rock/monster/whirlpool combination of Scylla and Charybdis from Homer's *Odyssey.*

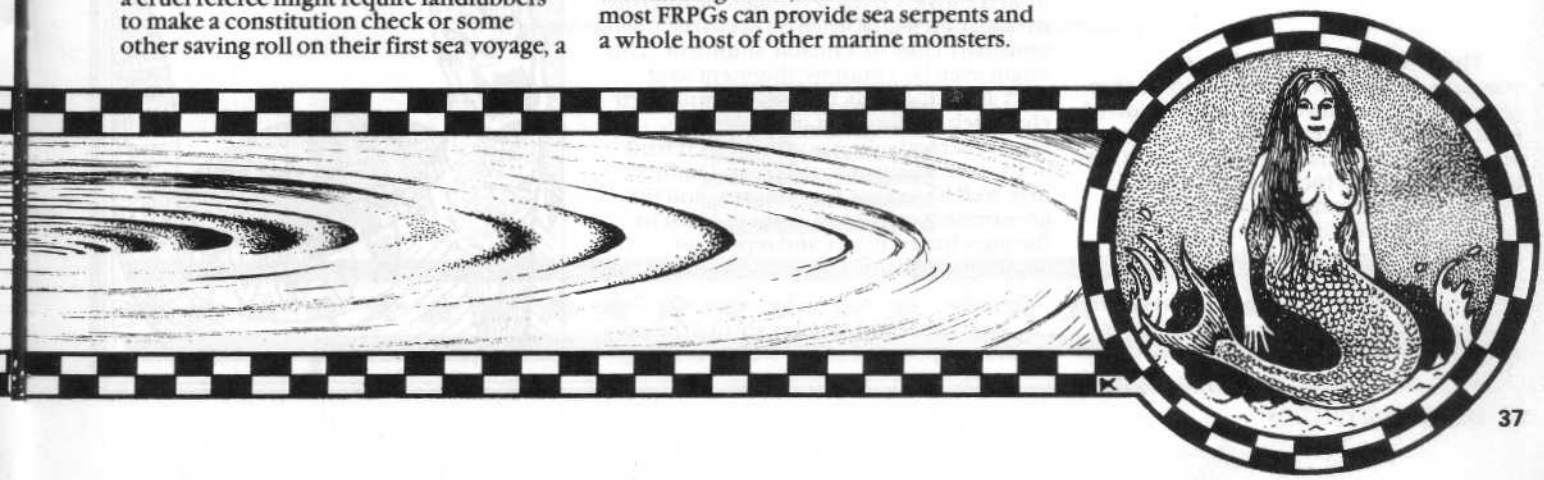
Another source of inspiration for seaborne adventures is provided by the numerous 'mysteries of the sea' that can be found in many books about the paranormal and the unexplained. I have already mentioned the legendary phenomena of Scylla and Charybdis and the clashing rocks, and the rulebooks of most FRPGs can provide sea serpents and a whole host of other marine monsters.

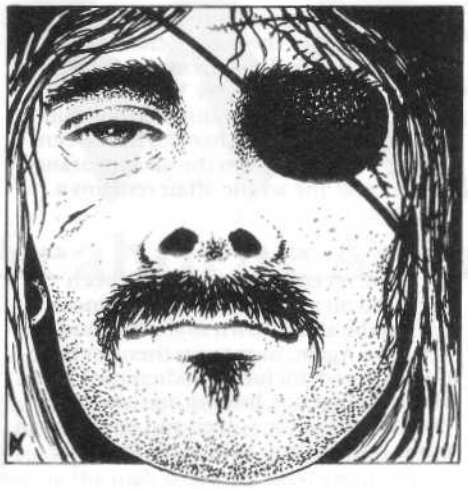
One of the most famous mysteries of the sea is that of the Mary Celeste. She was found drifting off the Azores in 1868, a month after leaving New York, and the crew had apparently vanished into thin air. Although several theories have been put forward to explain the disappearance of the crew, the whole affair remains a mystery.

More recently, attention has been focussed on a series of disappearances within the area known as the Bermuda Triangle. Again, numerous theories have been offered, including kidnapping by an alien intelligence, but the mystery will probably never be solved and referees can come up with any 'solutions' they like.

As well as mysterious disappearances, several mysterious *appearances* at sea have been reported. These can range from the occasional ghost ship to full-scale uncharted islands. Ghost ships are to the sea what haunted houses are to adventure on land, and although they may be discounted as mirages or other optical illusions caused by fog or tricks of the light, they will always remain a favourite attribute of maritime horror stories.

Within the Bermuda Triangle lies the Sargasso Sea, a roughly elliptical area of comparatively still water bounded by what might be described as a rotating ring of currents and strewn with a dense mass of floating seaweek. Columbus is generally credited with its discovery, although it has been claimed that his journal hints at evidence of its discovery by earlier voyagers, possibly the Carthaginians. Various legends exist of ships floating helplessly for centuries in the Sargasso Sea, trapped by the weed and calm air, and it is even claimed in some quarters that the weed bank marks the site of Atlantis. An oceanographic expedition in 1910 surveyed the Sargasso Sea, establishing its boundaries as about 20° and 35°N and 30° and 70°W.





Atlantis is not the only lost world in maritime legend; several cultures have traditions of a lost country in the west. The Greek Hyperborea, the Land Beyond the North Wind, is one example, and others include the Welsh and Arthurian Avalon, the lost Breton city of Is, and the legendary 'green island' (Ile Verte or Ilha Verde) of France and Portugal. Some mysterious islands are said to rise from the sea occasionally, either at random or on specific days of the year, sinking back into the sea after a few hours or days.

Sea Battles

Most of these ideas will be fairly easy to deal with according to the rules of whichever rpg system you use, but covering battles at sea can be a little more difficult. The *D&D* and *AD&D* game rules have short sections covering water-borne adventures (Expert Rulebook p42 and Dungeon Master's Guide p53 respectively), which should be adequate for most situations; players of other FRP games might be able to improvise their own rules, possibly based on rules for mass combat on land, or they could invest in a simple set of naval wargame rules. The rules given in *All The Nice Dwarves Luv a Sailor* in White Dwarf 82, although for Warhammer Battle, can be easily modified for use with Warhammer Fantasy Role-Play. For a more complex set of age-of-sail naval wargame rules, FGUs *Heart of Oak* is available on its own or as part of *Privateers & Gentlemen*. With most age-of-sail games, the referee will have to substitute catapults for cannon in the ship specifications, but this should not be too much of a problem.

The next step is to interface the wargame-level combat of the ship-to-ship actions with the individual-level action of your RPG. Whenever a ship carrying one or more player characters takes a hit in battle, determine the location of the hit (many naval wargames have hit location systems of one kind or another) and its likely consequences — a hit in the sails may bring rigging crashing down onto the deck, for example. Next, determine the individual effects for the characters, according to the game system being used. If any characters are in an area where a ship takes a hit, have each of them make a luck check or some other suitable saving throw in order to avoid incidental damage from flying splinters or falling tackle. Damage taken should be in proportion to the dice roll, and if any character fails particularly badly, the results could be fatal.

In addition to these hazards, enemy vessels may well have archers or other snipers posted in crow's-nests and along the rails, and their activities should be dealt with according to the normal combat rules.

You may find it useful to have ready-prepared deck plans for ship-to-ship combat, boarding and so on. Games Workshop's *Dungeon Floor Plans 3* includes a variety of small vessels at 25mm scale. *Skull & Crossbones* has deck plans for a variety of craft from a dugout canoe to a small ship-of-the-line, and the old Judges Guild D&D supplement *Sea Steeds and Wave Riders* might also be useful, but both of these might be difficult to get hold of.

Seaborne Adventures

The next time you design an evil wizard's castle or whatever, instead of setting it up a on a mountain or in a wasteland, put it on an island, surrounded by deadly reefs and treacherous currents. There might even be an aquatic monster guarding the only safe passage through the reefs. The evil wizard will probably have a ship of his own, possibly crewed by human or nonhuman slaves or undead, and he might come out to do battle at sea, aided by any aquatic or elemental nasties he can summon, before retreating to the island for a final showdown.

Pirates at sea are just as dangerous as bandits on land, so seaborne merchants will need mercenaries just as badly as overland traders. Some powerful merchants may have their own warships and militia, like the East India Company mentioned above. Characters might be hired as irregular mercenaries to protect an unusually large or valuable shipment. This might even be a dummy shipment to attract attention away from the genuine article which is being sent quietly overland. Alternatively, a powerful merchant body with a private warfleet and militia may well be a cause for concern, and the government might hire spies to enlist in the merchants' forces and report on anything suspicious.

Merchants and robbers are not the only trades to operate at sea as well as on land. Sea battles can form a major part of some wars, and many states will have powerful navies. As well as signing on as privateers (or being press-ganged) in time of war, characters might be recruited for covert operations such as spying and sabotage in enemy ports.

Many of the more common plots for adventures - quests, manhunts, sabotage, punitive raids, and so on - can take on a new dimension if you just add water. Trying to run down a fugitive in an archipelago of thirty or forty small islands can be a real challenge, especially if some or all of the islanders are on the fugitive's side, and the quest for a holy relic at the edge of the world can be considerably enhanced if the relic is on an island close to the point where the oceans fall off the edge of the world and into the void.

The next time your players have to get from one place to another, put some water in the way - you'll be surprised at the difference it makes.

Bibliography

Referees might find the following useful or inspiring when thinking about seaborne adventures.

The Odyssey - Penguin Classics
Orkneyinga Saga - Penguin Classics (and other Norse sagas)
Jason and the Argonauts - in The Greek Myths by Robert Graves (Pelican)
Queen of the Black Coast by Robert E Howard (other Conan stories, by Howard and other authors, also feature seaborne adventures)
The *Solomon Kane* stories by Robert E Howard, published in a number of collections.
The Sailor on the Seas of Fate by Michael Moorcock (Granada)
Pirates and Buccaneers by John Gilbert (Piccolo)
Ancient Mysteries by Peter Haining (especially the chapter on mysteries of the sea)
The Ocean Leech by Frank Belknap Long (published in some collections)
Boats of the Glen Carrig & The Ghost Pirates by William Hope Hodgson
The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym by Edgar Allan Poe
Treasure Island by Robert Louis Stevenson

*Hands up all those who thought that **'Eavy Metal** was going to come from Sheffield. So, you read that bit. Err, sorry, no Sheffield. Instead, all we can offer is Dioramas (a small town in Arizona), explained by Colin Dixon, GW's figure painter...*

Fig 1

Fig 2

Fig 3

Fig 7

Fig 4

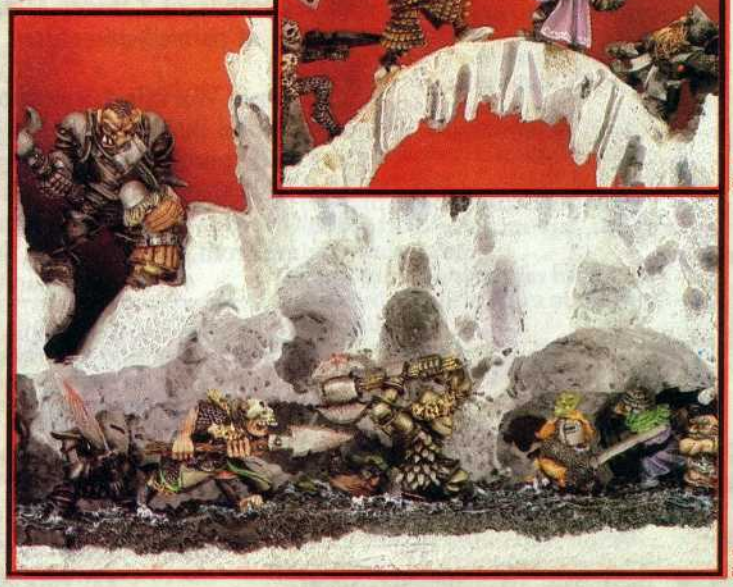


Fig 6

Fig 5

The Basics

After painting up umpty-thousand figures for games, what next? There must be something more than just putting them on separate bases. One of the next stages is to consider a diorama - a scene created with figures, some scenery, usually showing some sort of dramatic incident. It's a lot easier than it looks too, because many of the techniques and ideas used in painting figures are used when building dioramas - just on a bigger scale.

It's best to have an idea of what the finished display is going to look like before you start. A sketch of some sort is very helpful (even if it's only a diagram/map of where everything stands). Work out what figures you are going to use and paint them before thinking about building the rest of the diorama. There's nothing worse than finding that you can't quite reach a bit on a model when the whole thing is put together!

The landscapes are built up from polystyrene foam (a good, light and relatively cheap material), plaster and stiff card. I use a mixture of sand and PVA glue to fill in any gaps and give the ground a rough-cast appearance.

Construction

After the base board, or frame of the diorama, which is usually wood, the main bulk of the scenery in all dioramas is polystyrene, and cutting this cleanly requires a sharp knife. Unless you want an authentically blood-soaked scene of carnage, be careful with the knife! Alternatively, a polystyrene cutter (one of the hot wire ones) is also very useful - the Chaos Snow Wastes were created using one of these.

If you have several pieces of polystyrene, 'pin' them together with small pieces of wire for extra stability, as well as gluing them. Glue, of course, can be a problem with polystyrene. Superglue, for example, is definitely a bad idea. It's not a lot of fun watching all your work melt before your eyes. PVA and epoxy glues seem to be the best, but if in doubt, check what effects the glue has on a spare bit of polystyrene. After the main landscape shape has been built, any gaps are filled with the PVA/sand mixture or plaster.

Areas of open water - like ponds, pools, and streams - are easy enough to do. You can either paint a gloss varnish over the whole area (avoiding any brush marks, of course), or pour PVA glue over the entire area. It is possible to use cold cure resins as well, but this can be a very messy and long-winded process.

Building the extras in the scene is the next stage: the castle towers, bridges and the like. These are made out of thick card and, once built, they are given a stone finish with a coat of PVA. Sand is sprinkled over the whole affair. Once this is dry, the whole thing can be painted dark grey and drybrushed with white.

The siege tower, on the other hand, was made from plastic card (which any good model shop ought to stock). The detail was scored onto the surface using a sharp knife.

Finishing Off

The grass, stone and soil textures were all created using sand sprinkled over PVA glue as well - useful mixture, eh? This stage, once everything is dry, is the best time to paint the bulk of the diorama.

Once that's done, the figures and any small extra details can be added. I found that the easiest way to attach the figures securely was to leave the slottabases on and just hack a hole in the landscape, which then has to be hidden under a layer of PVA/sand. A quick-drying epoxy glue will hold them in place readily enough.

The final touches are putting on small details which could have been knocked off at an earlier stages. Touches like lichen and toadstools (made from modelling putty) are added at this point.

And that's just about it. Some form of protection for your hard work is a good idea. You don't really need to varnish anything as it should never be touched, but a case - or just putting the diorama in a cupboard away from dust - is a good idea.

*This time, no promises about next month's **'Eavy Metal...***

DIORAMAS

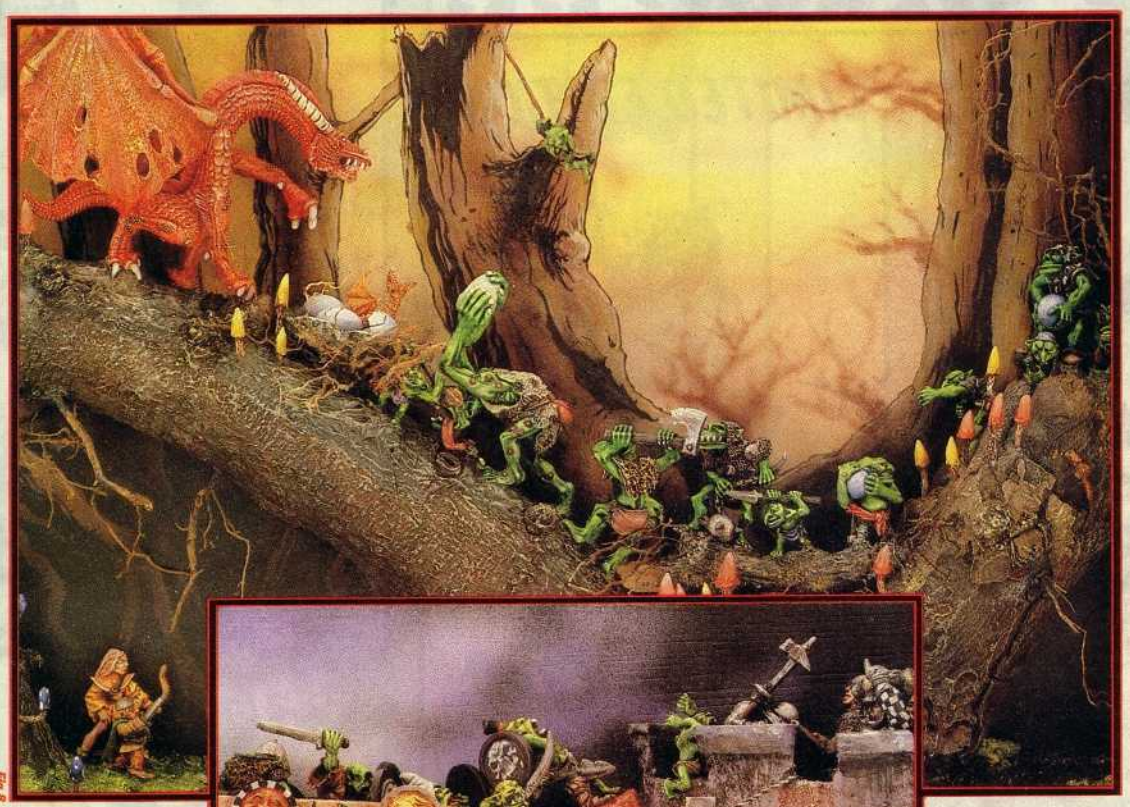


Fig 8

Fig 9

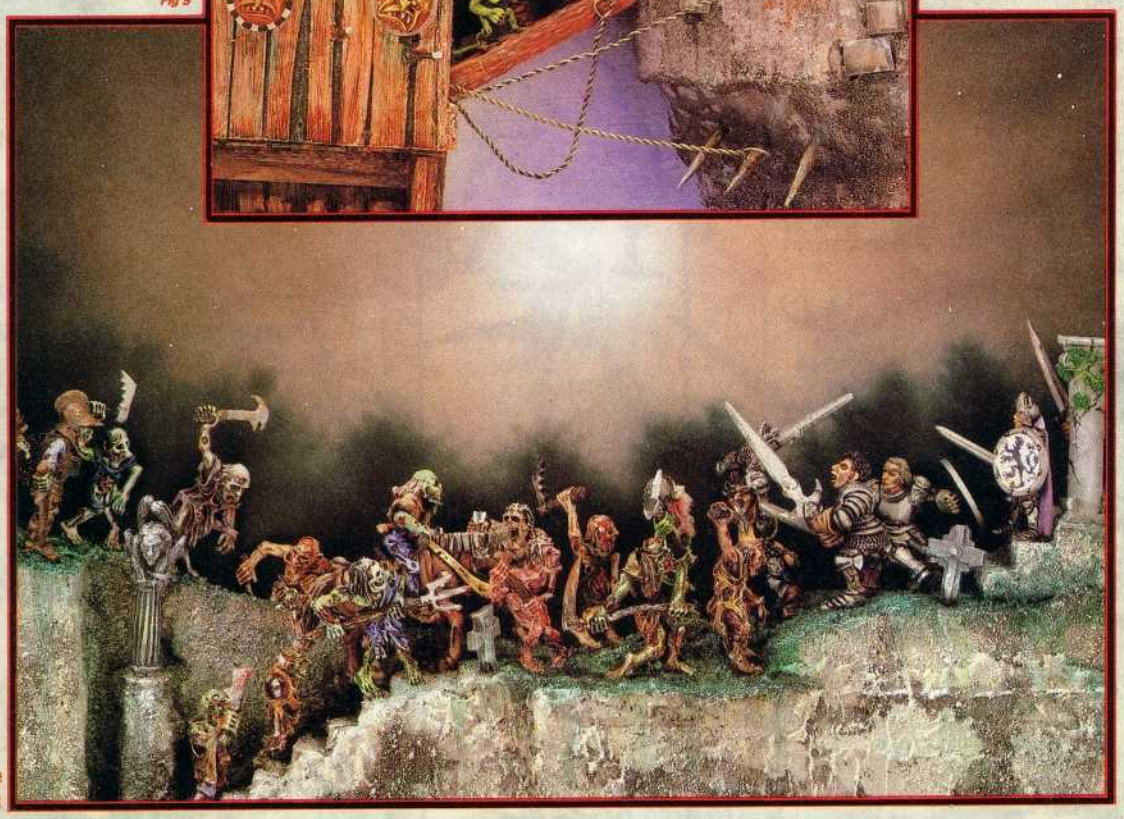


Fig 10

Fig 1. Cleric from the Goblin vs Men-at-Arms diorama.
Fig 2. C15 Orc stuck (literally) in the Moat.
Fig 3. The Broken Skull Goblins storm the castle of High Lord Lutenhaffen.
Fig 4. C35 Chaos Warrior at home in the Wastelands.
Fig 5. C28 Arch Demon Azoranth bellows in rage at the dwarfs assaulting his domain.
Fig 6. C35 Warriors battle the C06 Dwarfs. Note: guest appearance of Skragg the Slaughterer (C23 Ogre).
Fig 7. High above the Battle. Duke Soulstealer, (C35 Choas Warrior) strikes a blow for chaos against Lord Kazad (C06 Dwarf).
Fig 8. The New Citadel Red Dragon sees off the assortment of Ogres & Goblins stealing his eggs.
Fig 9. Once again the Broken Skulls attempt to enter Lutenhaffen's Castle staunchly defended by his Men-at-Arms.
Fig 10. The New Zombies (C18) battle the New Paladins (F5).
Fig 11. The Zombie Lord views the battle from above (C21 Undead Cav).

Fig 11

NOITARREPO

UFANS

erutnevda aionaraP A sreyalp ecivon rof sillaW semaJ yB

WARNING! Knowledge or possession of the contents of this document by any citizen of Security Clearance VIOLET or lower constitutes treason. Don't do it, friend Citizen. You know it makes sense.

YRAMMUS ERUTNEVDA

This adventure describes one of the ways that the Computer chooses which Infra-Red characters are intelligent, skilled and fanatical enough to make good Troubleshooters. The players will be sent on a simulated mission to track down a band of Commie traitors who are 'escaping' from Alpha Complex. Of course, this is *Paranoia* and things are not quite as they seem. But more of that later.

If you have only recently become elevated to the exalted position of *Paranoia* GM through the expedient purchasing of GW's new hardback edition, you will find that this adventure is an ideal way to introduce your players to the heady delights of intrigue, fear and laser-borne violence. If this one doesn't send 'em scurrying back to the safety of their dungeons nothing will and you'll be stuck with having to create more *Paranoia* adventures for thankless years to come. And guess what - this time we have put the map in!

SRETCARAHC EHT

The Troubleshooters who are going to serve the Computer so dilligently should be normal Paranoia characters, complete with mutant powers and secret societies. The characters are Infrared level but have received the same training as novice Red level Troubleshooters. Since this is a training mission with 'pretend' lasers the societies have not told their members to erase any other members of the training group - that comes later. If you can't be bothered to roll up new characters, use the ones that come in the Adventure Handbook. They'll do fine; after all, cannon-fodder is cannon-fodder,

GNINNIGEB EHT

Each player is at his or her normal place of work when they receive the following notice on their computer terminal:

ATTENTION TRAINEE TROUBLESHOOTER!! THE COMPUTER HAS RECOGNISED YOUR POTENTIAL AS A FUTURE TROUBLE-SHOOTER AND IS GIVING YOU A ONCE-IN-A-CLONETIME CHANCE TO UPGRADE TO SECURITY CLEARANCE RED. REJOICE IN THE GENEROSITY OF THE COMPUTER. TO DO THIS, YOU MUST PROVE YOURSELF A LOYAL AND TRUSTWORTHY CITIZEN, AND, ALONG WITH OTHER TRAINEE TROUBLE-SHOOTERS, PASS A SHORT TEST DEVISED BY THE COMPUTER. THIS TEST IS COMPLETELY SAFE AND YOU WILL NOT SUFFER DEATH OR PHYSICAL INJURY DURING IT. THIS IS GUARANTEED BY THE COMPUTER!

REPORT AT ONCE TO BRIEFING STATION CHNL-8 ON LEVEL NINE WHERE YOU WILL MEET THE OTHER MEMBERS OF YOUR TEAM AND BE ISSUED WITH FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS.

WARNING: FAILURE TO REPORT TO YOUR ASSIGNED BRIEFING STATION IS A TREASONOUS ACT PUNISHABLE BY IMMEDIATE AND PERMANENT DEATH. REMEMBER - THIS IS FOR YOUR OWN GOOD. THE COMPUTER IS YOUR FRIEND.

Should the prospective Troubleshooters decide that they are happy where they are, it is perfectly obvious that they must be Commie traitors and will be executed. After all, we all know that the life of a Troubleshooter is filled with fun and excitement, don't we? Only fools or traitors would turn down an offer like this! Wouldn't they?

Briefing Station CHNL-8 is not hard to find and before long the whole group is assembled. The room is ten metres by six, er, metres, and has a bank of screens at the far end, along with a console and two chairs. As the players are fiddling with the knobs on the console trying to get the Teela O'Malley show, a woman enters in the garb of an Orange level Troubleshooter, and everyone snaps to attention. This is Annie-O-KLY, the Troubleshooter in charge of running the mission. She inspects the motley crew and mutters

"At ease, you 'orrible bunch." Like her namesake, Annie-O has affected a hard-bitten cowboy accent and likes to think of herself as the living reincarnation of her idol, Dor-I-SDA, who she doesn't resemble in the slightest.

"You-all are here because the Computer needs more Troubleshooters, though why it picked you I have no idea. Still, ah s'pose even you guys couldn't mess up the trainin' mission.

"What would you-all do if I told ya that a group of li'l ole Commie traitors were tryin' to escape from Alpha Complex with a box containin' some vital bot parts?" Cue cries of horror and anguish. "Very good. Well, they're not really but we're gonna pretend that they are. One of 'em was wounded while a-stealin' the box and they've penetrated an old part of Alpha Complex where they're tryin' to hide while he recovers. You've gotta chase 'em, catch 'em and laser 'em to death before they fry you!

"What's that? Oh, you-all won't be using real lasers. You'll be usin' li'l biddy synthibeams which look like lasers, and the trainin' area is built so that anything you hit will look like you've lasered it. Meanwhile, I'll be watchin' your progress from this room - and so will your friend an' mine, the Computer.

"However, not all is as it seems. One of your cosy li'l group is" pause for dramatic effect "- a traitor!!" Cue yet more cries of horror and anguish. "Well, not really. One of you-all is gonna pretend to be a Commie and has gotta try and put the rest of the party off the right scent. Okay, that's all. Get yourselves along to room QM-15 where you'll be given your weapons and start the mission. Any of you turkeys gotta question?"

Allow a few questions but at the first sign of silliness Annie will draw her laser, whirl it around her finger a few times and then blast the floor two inches from the most paranoid character's left foot and say "Room QM-15. You have two minutes. Getcha skates on!"

Annie-O-KLY-2
Str 12 Agi 14 Man 23 End 13 Mox 8 Chz 14 Mec 12 Pow 6
Aimed weapon bonus: +30%
Mutant power: Superior Manual Dexterity
Secret Society: Sierra Club
Weapon: Laser pistol (Skill lvl 4) 75%

ROTIART EIMMOC EHT

As the party are about to leave the room, Annie hands a sealed envelope to each of the players. "Inside these li'l biddy envelopes" she says, "is a piece of paper sayin' if you're playin' the Commie or not."

Take one envelope per player. Copy out the following message once per envelope. Put one copy in each envelope, seal it, and mark it with a random number. Yep, you guessed it, they're *all* Commies. The Computer has fouled up again, though Annie doesn't know about this. Well, what did you expect from a *Paranoia* adventure?

> *Greetings, trainee Troubleshooter! The Computer has picked **you** to play the part of the Commie agent in your special training mission. DO NOT REVEAL THIS FACT TO ANY OTHER MEMBER OF YOUR TEAM. During the mission you must try to mislead the team and, if possible, 'kill' some of them with your 'laser' which will be fitted with knockout darts. This will **in no way** affect your possible selection as a Red level Troubleshooter.*
> *Serve the Computer. The Computer is your friend.*

TIB TXEN EHT

Having left room CHNL-8, the party will suddenly realise that they have no idea where room QM-15 actually is. Should they re-enter and attempt to question Annie-O they will be given rough directions and a couple of laser bolts into the door frame as an incentive. These directions are very approximate, however, and after five minutes of trying to follow them the party will realise that they are back outside the door of CHNL-8 again. There are various other ways to find room QM-15. For instance...

:Friend Computer!
At your service, citizen.
:Can you tell me how to find room QM-15 please?
What is your Security Clearance, citizen?
:Uh, Infrared, friend.
I'm sorry, but that information is not available at this time. At your service!

Well, maybe not. Try again.

"Uh, excuse me, sir, I realise that Blue level citizens have a great deal of important work to do but could you possibly take a break from your busy schedule of leaning against that wall and tell us how to find room QM-15?"
"No. Bug off, Infrared."

Or again...

"Uh, I'm sorry to trouble you again citizen Annie-O but..."
"GET OUT OF HERE!! BLAM! BLAM! YEE-HAW!"

But wait! Isn't that the familiar sound of a Vulture Squadron marching along the corridor towards the players? Indeed it is. Bring these guys along just as the players are beginning to wail, eat their dice and bang their heads against the table in frustration. The leader of the fifty-strong group notices the forlorn characters, stops his troops and, in a friendly voice, asks "Are you Infrared scum-balls aware that it is an offence to loiter in the corridors during working hours and I ought to shoot you all as filthy Commie mutant traitors?"

Allow the players to explain their reasons for treasonously hanging around and asking for directions, but the Vulture Squadron leader will demand more information on why they want to find room QM-15 until someone mentions the training mission. At this point various whispers start sussurating (look it up) around the Squadron. You can guess the sort of thing: "Training mission? (snigger)... do you remember? (muffled giggle) Infrareds! (chortle) Hmmpphh!" The entire Squadron collapses in hysteria at the memory of the training mission, and the Green level Squadron members roll around on the floor helpless with laughter, slapping the ground and mouthing "Training mission. Ha ha ha" through streams of tears. After a good thirty seconds of this the leader gets up, wiping his eyes, and between badly stifled guffaws gives the team directions to QM-15.

The purpose of this encounter is to confuse the players, and to make them very paranoid. Were the guards laughing at them, the mission - or something yet to come? Is there something they should know about this so-called 'training mission'? Are they all going to die? Or something worse? What do you think?

!TSAL TA - 51-MQ MOOR

Following the directions given by the Vulture Squadron the team should find room QM-15 with very little trouble. If they knock on the door, they hear a cheery "Come on in!" from within. (If they enter without knocking, Sant-Y glares at them, snaps "Get out and knock!" and won't speak to them until the whole party have left the room and knocked.) On entering they see a large room with ten seats in it and a raised platform at the far end, on which stand a large crate and two figures.

These people are Sant-Y-CLS and his assistant, Rude-O-LPH. Sant-Y is a large, jovial man who should be played as a cross between a gameshow host and a jolly uncle (a right

PARANOIA

patronising git, in other words). Rude-O, however, is really the awesome Captain Zapp, infamous member of the Death Leopard secret society, though he conceals this behind a mask of apparently infinite dumbness. Captain Zapp has pulled off many daring stunts in the past, including the siphoning of 500 gallons of Cold Fun from the storage vats (an exploit that left him with a permanently red nose due to the artificial colouring in the stuff!), and is about to pull off another deed of derring-do that will not only catapult him to the dizzy heights of a Death Leopard Hero but also result in the execution of Sant-Y! And guess who's going to help him in this little practical joke? That's right! See, this *is* fun!

While the team hover uncertainly around the door, Sant-Y beckons them in with a cheery wave. "Ho ho ho! How are you, citizens? All ready for your training mission? Ho ho ho! Has that nice Annie-O explaind everything to you? Quite clear? Good good. Then I guess you're all ready to start - but wait! Old Sant-Y almost forgot the most important thing of all! Ho ho ho! You can't go on your training mission without your synthibeam pistols, can you? Goodness no! Uncle Rude-O-LPH's got them right here, haven't you Uncle Rude-O-LPH?"

Sant-Y doesn't actually mean to be as annoying as he is, but as a member of the Romantics he once saw an Old Reckoning video tape of a character on whom he has modelled himself ever since. Ideally a few minutes of this rubbish should make your players' teeth ache.

Rude-O (or rather Captain Zapp) hands out a pistol to each of the Troubleshooters. True to Annie-O's promise they look just like normal laser pistols. This, of course, is because they *are* laser pistols. The Captain has switched them for the synthibeams that the team should have been given. (Remember, therefore, that somewhere in the stores are five or six synthibeams pretending to be laser pistols. Players appreciate good campaign continuity so use 'em at an appropriately desperate moment in another adventure.) By having the players shoot up the training ground a little, Rude-O intends to get Sant-Y in deep trouble. He doesn't know that they've been issued with instructions telling them to kill each other. Mind you, neither do they. Nor does the Computer. In fact, only you know this - isn't it great being the GM?

Sant-Y peers into the crate. "Any more goodies for our Infrared chums, Uncle Rude-O-LPH? What's this I see? Ho ho ho! Citizens, the Computer is trusting you with an experimental device: this wonderful hand-held laser jammer! Just push the button on the side and no laser beam will be able to hit you for the next three minutes! Isn't the Computer generous? Now, if you could just sign for all these super fun items here... and here... and here... and here..."

Surprisingly, the laser jammer does actually work as Sant-Y has described. When the button is pressed it emits clouds of thick black smoke for three minutes. The smoke covers the area within a 10m radius and absorbs all laser beams fired into or inside it, as well as reducing visibility within the smoke to zero. Additionally, all characters who breathe the fumes must throw their Endurance or less on 3d10 or start coughing so hard they are incapable of other action until the smoke clears. This device can only be used once.

Once the Troubleshooters have signed for the items (get them to sign a piece of paper but don't let them read what you've written on it), Sant-Y moves the empty crate away and opens the trapdoor that was concealed beneath it. He beckons the team onto the raised platform, and says, "Okay, Troubleshooters, your mission is about to begin! There are five Commies down there and it's your job to get them. Go to it!" Looking down the hole, the team see a metal ladder leading down into neon-lit gloom. As the last Troubleshooter starts climbing down, they all hear a faint "Ho ho ho!" and the trapdoor shuts with a clang.

DNUORG GNINIART EHT

The entire training ground resembles an area of abandoned Alpha Complex, mainly because that's what it is (this adventure is nothing if not logical). The area is lit by neon tubes in the ceiling, and every ten metres or so along the corridors, and in each room, is a video camera with audio pick-up, fixed to a stand about 3m off the floor. These cameras will swivel to follow the team as Annie-O monitors their progress from room CHNL-8. The Troubleshooters start in Area 1 (see the map we have thoughtfully included).

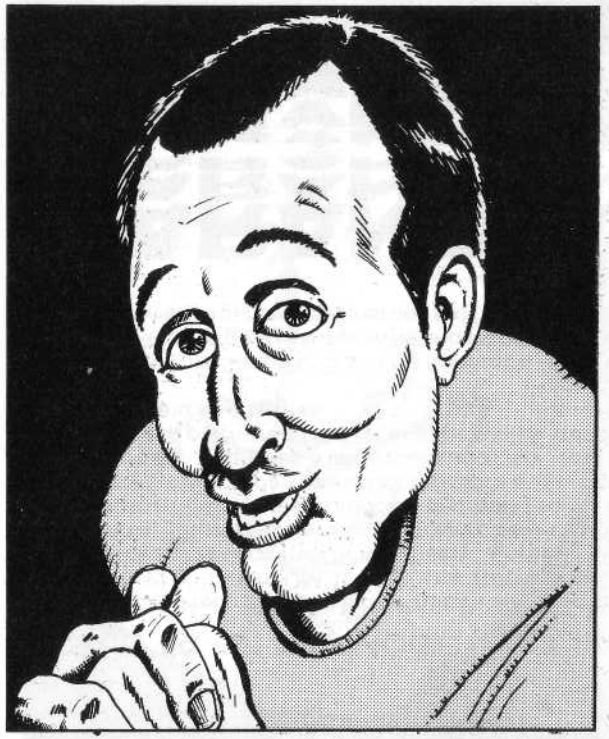
1: This area seems deserted. The air smells slightly musty, and a thin film of dust covers the floor. A door is set in the wall in front of the team. It's very quiet.

2: This small room has four corridors leading from it. The only indication of which one to take is a trail of (what looks like) fresh blood leading down the right corridor.

3: All Area 3s are the same - just standard empty rooms of varying dimensions. If you feel the team needs a little variety put something ambiguous in some of them: buckets of stale Cold Fun, stuffed owls, large empty boxes, anything that will annoy the players for a few minutes.

4: All Area 4s are similar, holding Computer terminals bearing the words 'At your service, Citizen' on the screen. They are perfectly standard devices, and of course will refuse to answer any question about the current mission.

5: The trail of blood leads down a corridor to the right, but in the passageway ahead is a standard-model scrub-bot which seems to be behaving rather erratically. Closer ex-



amination will show that is moving in a pattern that traces out the hammer and sickle! Of course, it's a well-known fact (well know by the Computer, anyway) that dastardly Commie agents fleeing the forces of truth and justice always stop to reprogram bots to implant subtle Commie propaganda into citizens' minds like this. Attempting to reprogram the bot is to show possession of a treasonous skill; sensible Troubleshooters will just shoot it, wherupon it will explode with a satisfactory bang.

6: The trail of blood leads to this dark room. As the Troubleshooters peer into the darkness, a bolt of (real) synthibeam light comes blasting out, narrowly missing one of them. A lone Commie (actually a Red level Troubleshooter with 37% to hit with laser pistol) is holed up in here with orders to fire until he is shot twice and then pretend to die. Thanks to Rude-O, of course, his acting skills will not be tested too heavily.

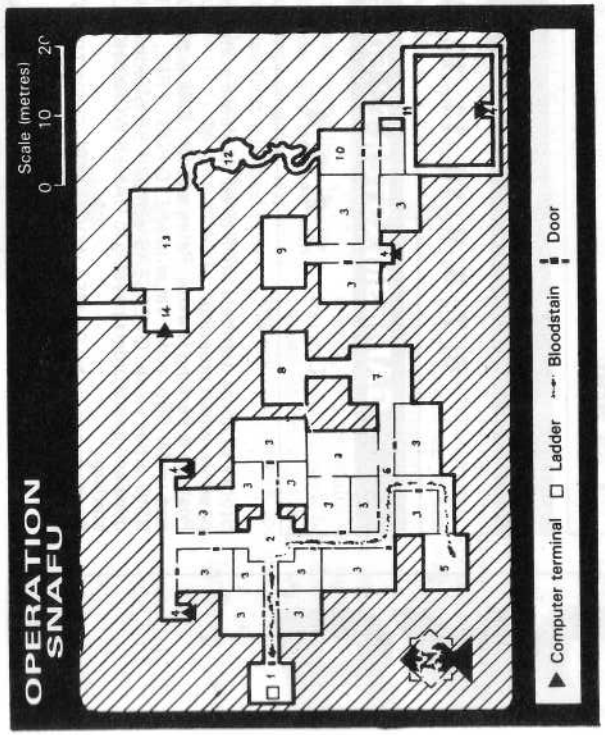
7: This room is darker than most, as two of the lights are broken. It is empty, but as the party are about to leave they hear a voice from behind them shout "Halt! Throw down your lasers!". Encourage them to think it's a Commie. Actually, it's Annie-O, who's realised something's wrong and, deciding to stop it, has followed them into the training ground. The first laser shot they fire will hit her smack in her pretty li'l head, making her completely unidentifiable.

8: This room contains two standard elevators. One has its doors open; the other cannot be summoned. There is a panel inside the elevator with two buttons on it, labelled UP and DOWN. When either is pressed the doors close; after ten seconds of silence the mechanism whines, groans, and stops altogether. The doors cannot be reopened, but there is a trapdoor in the top of the elevator, 2½m above the floor. To get from the top of the lift to the floor above (where the lift doors are thoughtfully open, incidentally) the Troubleshooters must climb 5m of cable by throwing their Agility or less on 2d10.

9: This room is identical to 8, but no lift can be summoned here.

10: As the party walk past these open doors, a synthibeam shoots out of the room and into the Area 3 opposite. The room is filled with all kinds of junk - broken chairs, old mattresses, that sort of thing - and concealed behind these is a rough tunnel which is just big enough to crawl along on hands and knees. There is nobody in here now, but noises can be heard from down the tunnel.

11: This area is intended for trainees who wish to explore or waste time, but wouldn't it be amusing if half the party went one way, half went the other and they mistook each other for Commies in the middle? Go on, dare ya to!



12: This is a bare room, hewn from the concrete istelf. Condensation drips from the ceiling and there is no light. Commie slogans have been daubed around the walls in greens and yellows. Aging D&D players will feel right at home here.

13: As the party emerge from the tunnel into this room, synthibeams start flying from behind a barricade of upturned tables at the far end. The remaining four Commies are hiding behind there and it should be fairly easy for the Troubleshooters to wipe 'em out - unless they're too busy trying to wipe out the non-Commie sympathiser in their own group! The four 'Commies' are all Red level Troubleshooters with 42%, 38%, 31% and 20% to hit with laser pistols respectively. None of them will use their mutant powers. Hidden behind the barricade is the box Annie-O told the team about. It weighs 10 kilos and cannot be opened.

14: As the remains of the party stagger in here, bleeding from their several wounds, they find a totally deserted room, except for a terminal against the far wall which suddenly clicks on and delivers the following message:

> ATTENTION RED LEVEL TROUBLESHOOTERS! CONGRATULATIONS ON COMPLETING YOUR TRAINING MISSION. UNFORTUNATELY, DUE TO OTHER COMMITTMENTS ANNIE-O-KLY-2, SANT-Y-CLS-3 AND RUDE-O-LPH-4 CANNOT ATTEND TO JOIN IN YOUR CONGRATULATIONS. REPORT AT ONCE TO ROOM 101 FOR IMMEDIATE DEBRIEFING AND TERMINATION. YOUR CLONES HAVE ALSO BEEN UPGRADED TO SECURITY CLEARANCE RED AND WILL BE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THEIR FIRST PROPER MISSION, BEGINNING TOMORROW. THANK-YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.

DNE EHT SI SIHT

And so the players, loyal to the last, march off into the neon sunset towards Room 101. If you're feeling vicious, execute them on the following charges:

Murder
More murder
Destroying the Computer's valuable resources (to wit: one Scrub-bot)
Misuse of the Computer's valuable resources (to wit: six laser pistols and one laser jammer)
Consorting with known traitors (to wit: Sant-Y-CLS-3 and Rude-O-LPH-4)
Loitering in corridors during working hours

If, however, you feel you've extracted all the pain, suffering and mental torture you want out of your gaming group already, or if they deserve another chance at losing their first clones in a more spectacular blaze of glory, try the following:

As the Troubleshooters queue by the sign saying 'Summary Execution: Commie Traitors Q Here', they suddenly hear the Alpha Complex PA system break off from its non-stop playing of Teela O'Malley's greatest hits, and the following announcement booms down the corridors.

> ATTENTION RED LEVEL TROUBLESHOOTERS *(insert players' names here)*. YOU ARE URGENTLY REQUIRED IN MEM SECTOR. REPEAT. YOU ARE URGENTLY REQUIRED IN MEM SECTOR. COME BACK, TROUBLESHOOTERS, ALL IS FORGIVEN. SERVE THE COMPUTER. THE COMPUTER IS YOUR FRIEND.

This then leads directly into the adventure 'Robot Imana-655-C' which can be found in the back of the new hardback edition of *Paranoia*, or in the *Paranoia Screen* pack if you're a cheapskate with the old set. This is, of course, a suicide mission, but it will give the team a chance to redeem themselves.

SETON LANIF EROM

Firstly, in case you were wondering, nobody ever fails the training mission - and lives. Characters either become full Troubleshooters or get executed.

Try to keep the party unaware of the true nature of their weaponry until at least half way through the mission - the longer the better. It will probably become a little obvious when badly-aimed synthibeams start tearing chunks out of walls and blast large holes in human beings, but try to make them believe it's all just really good special effects (tell 'em it's all done with holograms, perhaps). If the Troubleshooters don't kill Annie-O in room 7, and throw down their weapons as requested, they will all survive. Unfortunately, the Computer quickly realises that Troubleshooters who throw down their lasers when they're told to aren't going to be much good as full agents. The players stay at Infra-red level. That's what being a wiseass does for you.

RIVERS OF BLOOD

Egbert Gulliver Throgbottle MacFarquaharson never could quite get the hang of his name. Neither could any of the other inhabitants of Scumbridge; some of them tried calling him 'Egg' for short but this turned out to be a very bad move. The young lad did not much care for being named after small, easily squashed objects and made this abundantly clear. Those who survived his objections, however, fortuitously discovered an alternative appellation to the one so unkindly bequeathed by his travelling salesman father. When Egbert was a *very* young lad, and still possessed the vestiges of decent manners, he was in the habit of knocking on doors when he wished to enter one of the verminous hovels which comprised his native village. From the frequent reply of 'Come in' (for the folk of Scumbridge had not at this time developed the highly rational paranoid fear of the young fellow which led to their doors being permanently locked and bolted) his miniscule brain constructed the notion that he must be called 'In', interpolating a nonexisent comma between the two words. In; short and to the point. Egbert Gulliver Throgbottle MacFarquaharson liked this, because he could remember it; words of one syllable were one of his few real pleasures in life. The remaining population of Scumbridge liked it too, because they got to stay alive by using the shorter name. In's dumbness was exceeded only be a capacity for extreme violence at the slightest provocation.

As he grew up, incredibly strong and muscular from a high-protein, high-fibre diet, In became a notable figure in Scumbridge. By the age of 10 he had won the annual ox-wrestling context in Scumbridge.and the next year he was champion at this ancient sport for the whole county of Plookford. Oxen grew pretty wary of In. So did almost everything else, for In was twice the size of any other human being ever seen and while not *exactly* psychopathic had a neglectful and overpermissive mother, a rotten temper, and was so stupid that he might (and frequently did) kill or disable people purely by accident. Thus the invasions, when they came, were not wholly regarded with total horror by all in Scumbridge. Young men were having to join the Army - the invasions might mean the end of In's residence in the village...

The invasions were just incursions from the hills at first; by late summer, though, the invading forces got bigger and nastier, including giants, whole flocks of trolls, and numerous huge two-headed humanoid things with bad breath, huge clubs and unkind attitudes towards humanity. At first the people of Plookford thought they were just another bunch of tax collectors but they were soon disabused of this notion. Tax collectors generally killed people *after* extracting their money from them, for one thing. Like most men, In did the decent thing and went to join up. The terrified inhabitants of Scumbridge prayed for an end to the oppression, but he came back; while stupidity was generally regarded as a positive attribute in the Imperial Guard, In was so staggeringly thick that not even the Army could bring itself to accept his proffered services. It seemed likely that In would kill more of his fellow soldiers than he would enemies. His delicate ego crushed by the cruel rejection, In returned home and did what any young man in his position would have done; he went to see his social worker.

'Perhaps this is something of a blessing in disguise, In', cooed said person on her way back from the multiracial gay creche. 'You can be active in a quasi-missionary role. The problem with the giants and trolls and superficially unattractive two-headed persons is that they never has a decent social worker when they were young. Their racist, sexist upbringings have given them problems of social integration and they haven't formed broad inter-relational competences. You could be an emissary for optimized race relations.' It was one of the minor tragedies in Scumbridge like that In had not killed his social worker.

In thought about this for a while, insofar as he could think, for he did not understand much of the social worker's polysyllabic utterances. After a while he came to consider that the gist of her suggestions was that he should go out and murder the bastards by the score so, taking an ox for food and one of the massive stone axes his father has sold his gullible mother for chopping firewood, he set out for the hills. The inhabitants of Scumbridge were dead drunk for a week in celebration.

Stories of In's exploits soon filtered back to allegedly civilized parts. In had slain scores, hundreds, nay *thousands* of giants, trolls, and related creatures with inter-relational competence difficulties. Tangible evidence flowed back to support these stories. Rivers of blood cascaded down verdant hillsides in the autumnal sunshine and distressed women doing their washing. As the invasions began to tail off and the rivers remained scarlet the people of Plookford began to think more kindly of In and returned to drinking, gambling, whoring and visiting their social workers.

The giants, however, were pretty fed up with life and struck a deal with the evil Baron Sidebottom of Honknorton, a mercenary and vicious brute in the final stages of a particularly rare and ravaging brain disease. His army set out to deal with In; a legion of evil cavaliers, a flock of anti-paladins, even a vampire-mage. In shredded the lot. What the Baron didn't know was that In had acquired, from the tower of a princess he had mistaken for a troll and cut to dogsmeat, a magical vorpal chainsaw. There was no stopping the young hero now; the rivers were redder than ever.

Sidebottom was enraged and cashed in a debt with friends in low places. A flock of minor demons set forth for the hills. In shredded them too. At this point certain infernal entities took a more direct interest in matters and a flock of medium-size demons was despatched. In had a *wonderful* time with them. The chainsaw didn't need any fuel and just kept on going, and while sometimes bits of bone and flesh splattered in In's face and his vision got a bit impaired he discovered that simply continuing to whirl the thing around in a wide semi-circle had gratifying effects.

Some rather more important demons were now informed about In. He appeared to be quite immune to magic, which was considered to be due at least in part to his complete lack of anything resembling intelligence or imagination. In turn this suggested the lack of anything more complex than the rudimentary neural apparatus necessary for supporting a basic system of reflexes, and learned demons discussed whether magic depended on an intact brain for its effects. After many hours philosophizing their conclusions were summarized by one of their number leaping to its hooves with a shriek of 'Stuff this, let's get the bugger!'

A flock of chasmes, wicked fly-demons with glowing red eyes and diseased probosci trembling with the anticipated pleasure of inflicted lethal infections, flew from the Abyss. In pulled their wings off. Things took a turn for the worse when the succubi came back with *their* wings pulled off, crying and with their mascara running down their faces. They looked *awful*. The demon lords conferred and sent out eight of their great champions, huge and brutish creatures shod with great iron and bronze bracers and girdles, wielding cruelly barbed and snagged weapons which dripped acid, spat fire, and expelled clouds of steam and smoke. They lasted precisely four minutes against the young hero. In fact, In was pretty glad to see them, because he was getting bored and hungry and he rather liked roast demon; and protein levels and with a high fibre content if you ate the right bits.

The insult to the demonic realms was taken to heart. The great Overlord of all demons summoned his demon lords and informed them in no uncertain terms that despatching champions and underage girls (for it had been discovered that the succubi were a bit short in the fang) was no way for them to act. They would have to go and deal with the upstart young human themselves. This was exactly what the demon lords had expected to hear and they did not care for it one bit. Grumbling, they gathered up their armour, shields, weapons, rings, wands, rods, staves, and experimental-stage tactical nuclear weapons (the fruits of some startling advances in the Abyss in recent millennia) and set out for the Plookford hills.

The battle raged for hour after hour. Every conceivable variety of demonic body tissue splattered the rocks and the rivers contained the lowest actual *water* content in the history of the world. Finally, as the sun was setting in the north (for this was a strange world) the arc of the whirring chainsaw wavered, halted, and then the glinting steel of the saw was raised vertically to the heavens and finally toppled and fell. The young hero of Scumbridge was dead, but there were few demons left to celebrate, and those still alive weren't in much of a state to celebrate anyway.

The Demonic Overlord arrived at dusk, shortly before his habitual evening pedicure, to survey the scene. Crawling towards him came one of his most powerful lieutenants. The bloodied, lacerated figure looked up at him with bloodshot eyes, forlorn and haggard.

'It's all true, what we were told. First I lost my friends, then my health was ruined forever, I've lost my looks... I would have done anything, lied, cheated, stolen, to get away... it's true, I swear it. Hero In *really* screws you up.'

by Gary Holland

LETTERS PAGE
WHITE DWARF
ENFIELD CHAMBERS
16/18 LOW PAVEMENT
NOTTINGHAM NG1 7DL

IMPORTANT NOTICE: Possession of microscopes, magnifying glasses, and other image enhancing devices is a treasonable offence punishable by summary execution, please report for termination immediately Citizen. Thank you.

Before I start another two pages of blatant rudeness, I have been asked to point out that the views expressed on this page bear absolutely no relation to those held by the editor of this magazine, and even if they did he would never admit to it anyway. Thanks.

Cpt Mark Deathsloth, Cloud Cuckoo Land: As a committed live action roleplayer (like all LRPGers, I'm clutching my pen woth both hands and admiring my new-found skill of joined up writing) I feel that I must protest strongly (read: bitch at) David Rawlins' pompous assertion regarding my part-time infatuation. Live roleplaying is in no way respectable. I cheerfully confess to being a 'loony who dresses up in silly costumes and bashes about with a rubber sword.' I ask you, what is so incredibly worthwile about bashing hell out of spotty schoolkids decked out as orcs? Nothing, sirrah! If Mr Rawlins continues to enforce these senseless pretensions upon a hobby made up, in the main, of complete fools (and I *know*, I'm in it) I shall be forced to poke him in the ribs with a carrymat-foam-and-gaffer-tape sabre.

More incontrovertable evidence that I'm an LRPGer - I'm still using notepaper that I had when I was seven.

Ian Marsh [*Who he? - Ed.*], **London**: I may, of course, be biased, but I must disagree with David Rawlins' veiled comments (WD83) about the last Dwarf team's attitude towards live roleplaying.

David appears to have forgotten the state live roleplaying was in then. I was a far from honourable part of the hobby. Treasure Trap had collapsed, and many of its organisers had mysteriously disappeared. The press and the fraud squad were investigating its affairs. Timescape, a live roleplaying holiday purporting to take place in the Leicester area failed to get off the ground - and also failed to refund those who had sent in money.

Small wonder, therefore, that White Dwarf needed to be careful about live roleplaying. Snide remarks, rather than being aimed at live roleplaying were deserved directed at the ineptness of its organisers.

Now the furore has died down, live roleplaying is coming into the public eye, but it has to be welcomed with some caution. Live roleplaying is as much a part of the games hobby as D&D and Fighting Fantasy; if it is not to discredit the hobby, then it must prove itself as reliable and honest as these parts.

None of this means I approve of Marc Gascoigne's unwarranted attack on live roleplaying. It shows rather too much of a closed mind than is desirable in the hobby media towards a related pastime.

Let's continue with the fan-club notices:

Ian Marsh (again): The 'new' Dwarf, incidentally, looks splendid and 'old' one is quite dowdy in comparison. It is reassuring to notice that the typographical goofs are at least grander to go with the new image.

Virginia Tapson, Lustleigh, Devon: I *love* the serial on page 3 - what position on the WD staff will Marc Gascoigne (hiss, boo, get back to *Warlock*!) hold next month, I wonder? Does it depend on how big a nuisance he is? Proofing, sub-editing, consulting editor, letters editing, reviews editing... why not give him Assistant Tea-Boy and be done with it?

Karl Sargent, Cambridge: Readers may have noticed that my article on Narks in WD82 wasn't about narks at all, but was actually about informers. The erroneous heading was due to the same Commie mutant traitor who spelled my name incorrectly on the contents page, and who also forgot such trivial considerations as including the maps for the *Paranoia* adventure in WD81. Dwarf reader/investigators are urged to locate and terminate the said Commie. His name probably begins with 'Cock'. Thank-you for your co-operation.

Simon Jones, Grangetown, Cardiff: I'm glad to see WD ever improving, ever more glossy. It's also good to see how very aware you are of hobby 'fashions' (no hardware, in-depth speculations upon the meanings of maps, that sort of thing). How clever of you to realize that it's much more fun for us to sit around talking about roleplaying games than to actually play them.

Of course, there is a lot more money in the hobby nowadays, especially for a magazine with the honesty and integrity to become an advertising medium for its parent company. I most strongly admire your decision not to reduce the price or, like most successful magazines do, lower the cost of a year's subscription to below the cost of twelve copies. I have only praise for this policy without which, who knows, the hobby might suffer the deleterious effect of having people without money enjoying it.

Ooh, do I detect an attempt at sarcasm? And I bet you still avidly buy this magazine every single month, and will continue to do so when we put the price up next... whoops. Forget that bit.

Graeme Bishko, Ealing, London: Plenty of people go to lots of trouble to publish scenarios for game systems but one of the consistently bad parts of many modules in the introduction. *Traveller* modules tend towards the Patron (with 'patron' sign around neck) approaching players in the starport lounge; *AD&D* (and many other fantasy games) have the standard sit-in-bar routine until... IT'S TIRED!! How can it be that one of the most important parts of an adventure, and certainly that part that sets the tone of the rest of the adventure, can be so stereotyped?

It's true that a hobby noted for its reliance on the power of the imagination can occasionally show a distinct lack of it. Mind you, one of the reasons White Dwarf is here is to pass on imaginitive ideas for those lacking them, I guess, and we shall endeavour to continue doing just that. Of course, there are always going to be people who just haven't got a clue...

Jonathan Turner, no address: So what's wrong with *Twilight 2000*? A minority game I grant you, but surely a game can't become well-known unless such great roleplaying institutions as yourself (slurp slurp fawn fawn) print some stuff about it. After all, I did see an article on *Doctor Who* (a good game, I'm sure), so if you can do that do something to improve Twilight's reputation. I'd also like to say that if blowing up Communists doesn't appeal to you, the game allows you to be Russian and blow up Americans instead.

Laurielle Miller, Baton Rouge, Louisiana: I'd like to remind all those people who've criticised *Twilight 2000* and *Judge Dredd* that Western literature opens in a burst of violence. From Odysseus and Agamemnon before the walls of Troy to Clint Eastwood on the streets of San Francisco to Sigourney Weaver facing the Aliens, it has been the sword that has shaped our world. All societies are built on a barbarian base, all nations must guard against the neighbours. The barbarian at home and the foreigner abroad must be ruthlessly subdued. The streets at home and the empire abroad must be reduced to order...

Er, yes, um, welcome to our planet. I think you'll find we do things a little differently here... On the other hand, I do find it funny that many people criticise Twilight 2000 and

all those other tacky games, and then continue to play out their own xenophobic fantasies against innocent communities of orcs or trolls. Incidentally, in case our readers are wondering, yes, Laurielle did send a photo, and, no, we aren't going to print it, just as I refuse to print her comments about underwear.

Michael S Dobson, TSR, Inc., Lake Geneva: The July issue of *White Dwarf* just made it to my desk. Imagine my surprise when I turned to the 'Fracas!' column to learn that "just about everyone who has written scenario material for the D&D/AD&D games in the last year is no longer with the company".

It's true, of course, that Paul Cockburn, Tom Kirby, Phil Gallagher and Jim Bambra [*what about Mike Brunton? - Ed.*] are now working for Games Workshop, and it's true that Tracy Hickman has moved from a staff position at TSR, Inc., into the exciting life of a freelance writer. (Tracy is, however, continuing to do work for us; the sequel to *Ravenloft* will be in your local stores before Christmas.)

But that's not "just about everyone". Doug Niles, Jeff Grubb, David 'Zeb' Cook, Frank Mentzer, Anne Gray McCready, Mike Breault, Harold Johnson, Bruce Heard, Roger Moore and myself are still hard at work at TSR, Inc., and Graeme Morris is holding the fort at TSR UK Ltd. Several other designers have moved into the freelance arena, but are still working almost exclusively for TSR, including Jim Ward, Bruce Nesmith, Kim Eastland and others.

What's really going on is that we're moving away from a completely in-house design staff, and toward a greater reliance on freelance designers. That's good for the D&D and AD&D games, because many different talents can have an opportunity to share their imaginations with you. Such talented people as Aaron ('Lands of Mystery') Allston, Allan ('Globbo') Varney, Dave ('Blackmoor') Arneson, Ken ('Paranoia') Rolston and Greg ('DC Heroes') Gorden are or will be published by us in the upcoming months.

That also means that we at TSR are more open to freelance game and module submissions than was once the case. If you are a published writer, and you're interested in exploring the possibility of freelancing for the biggest and best adventure game company in the world, drop a line to Bruce Heard, Games Aquisitions Coordinator, TSR, Inc., POB 756, Lake Geneva, WI 53147 USA, and ask for a copy of our submissions guidelines. Be sure to tell Bruce in your letter where and when your work has been professionally published.

Thanks for the letter, Mike; we were at a loss for who to sack or have executed this month when your note arrived to solve our problem. Paul's widow has, however, asked me to point out in his defence that his comment concerned only the UK side of TSR's operation, where it is true that all but one of the creative staff have left to join us here at GW. It's interesting to see good old Dave Arneson back on the team; I trust this has nothing to do with Gary not being around any more? No, I thought not...

Sandy Douglas, Aberdeen: I would like to thank - through your magazine - all those who attended or donated to the *Dragon Aid* event held in Aberdeen. The event took the form of 36 hours of marathon playing, followed (after a night's rest) by a weekend Games Con. Because of the speed and short notice at which the event was organised and took place, the attendance was not as good as was hoped, but we still managed to raise £600 for Band Aid.

I would like to thank Aberdeen University for the use of the Hall and Games Workshop, TSR UK, Dixons Miniatures and Virgin Games (Aberdeen) for donations of prizes, etc. Thanks to all others who donated or helped keep the event going. It has been suggested that an annual event should be held in Aberdeen, and I would like to appeal to all your northern readers to let me know if they are interested so I can gauge the support such a fund-raising event of this kind would receive. Please write to Sandy Douglas, Dragon Aid Local Organiser, 13 Springbank Terrace, Aberdeen.

Paul Johnson, Maidenhead, Berks: I've a complaint about the otherwise very good article on the Discworld in WD82. Mr Shepherd states quite plainly that Disc dragons can't breathe fire. Well, on p146, Twoflower is stuck in a cell and thinks up a dragon who burns the door down and frightens off a dozen guards by breathing fire. I'd say that Disc dragons should be given a breath weapon appropriate to their HD.

The Double-Damage Brothers, Hampstead, London: In your article 'A Stroll Across The Discworld' (WD82) you claim that Elves do not exist. But according to Terry Pratchett himself, and I quote: "Only elves and trolls survived the coming of man to the Discworld". So you, or rather Ashley Shepherd, are wrong.

Thanks, folks. Ashley is actually a Miss, but rest assured that we have assailed various tender parts of her anatomy and banished her to the desolate wildernesses of Warlock magazine to serve her penance for not reading every last word in the Discworld books like you guys obviously have.

Eoin Cannon, Sutton, Dublin: Yo, Whitey! Just writing to tell you that I bought the Thrud miniature and balanced 18 snotlings, an inconvenienced dwarf and his toilet on top of him. Is this a record?

Sob sob sob! Do we have to suffer these people?

Douglas Thomson, Upper Smiddyseat, Aberdeenshire: Why do you persist in printing envelopes on pages of the magazine? This means that readers have to sacrifice a whole page of their favourite magazine in order to enter competitions or send away any of the other things you offer (eg the Readers' Poll).

I think we all know by now that Games Workshop have taken over *White Dwarf*, so why do you keep rubbing it in by printing page after page of Games Workshop adverts? Surely other companies should be given more space to advertise their products too - or are you scared of losing business?!! The Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay pull-out was a good idea, but why don't you do it for other games too? I personally think it is an excellent way of introducing new games to the people who will be most likely to buy it.

Douglas, old chap, you have a wonderful address, but you are a bit dense sometimes! We print envelopes in the magazine so you don't have to pay to enter our competitions or reply to the Poll. If you would rather photocopy the relevant pages and spend 18p on a stamp to send them in that's fine with us.

And what do you mean "now that GW have taken over WD", you idiot??! Games Workshop have owned the Dwarf since Issue One, and have never been away! It's ***always*** *been a house-magazine - whatever that means - and it always will be. We advertise in our own magazine because we make games that we think are good and want people to buy. Why does anyone advertise, answer me that if you will? Other companies are at liberty to take just about as much or as little advertising in White Dwarf as they wish - and most of the major companies do so all the time. It's only the cost, I think, that stops them from doing 8-page pull-outs, but if they wanted to do something like that we'd be only too happy to publish it for them! Last issue we had West End's glossy flyer, for example, and no doubt we will continue to include many more for other companies with products to sell. Not that this is any sort of excuse, but I personally find that some of the adverts are more interesting than some of the articles.*

Alastair Brown, Hellesdon, Norwich: How about some praise for the Dwarf? It continues to get fatter, better, and yet doesn't increase in price! And who dares criticise the reviews? Let's take the review page in WD82. Ah, *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide*. Stop, let's think this one out. TSR make D&D, so Dwarf under Games Workshop will stamp on it, yes? NO! It gets an excellent review, so good that I feel it deserves a closer look from me. It duly gets this, and shock horror WD's review was correct! Then *Skyrealms of Jorune*, again, not GW, but another fair review! How can they do this? Surely they should hate them all!

I agree totally. If a product is good, no matter who makes it, it gets a good review. At least, that's the way it should work. Personally, I'm a bit worried at the sudden rash of good reviews of TSR products now almost all their UK creative staff work for GW, but I'm sure there's no connection.

Steven Hoare, Grouville, Jersey: I agree with Kenneth Lea's letter (WD82) concerning how Psionics cause headaches at low levels, but I feel it is unnecessary to discontinue them. There are a number of remedies that a DM can adopt: make certain activities more expensive as Kenneth suggested, give creatures natural psionic defences, make certain rock nullify psionics or, as my previous DM loved to do, switch planes - which can cause severe problems, especially when you're caught in the shape of a sparrow.

Lastly, I believe that a psionic character would try to keep his abilities secret from his fellow adventurers, especially as he would not know how they would react. Characters who are more efficient than the rest of the party are often looked on with fear and suspicion by paranoid players!

And that's it for another month. Send your letters to the usual address, etc etc. [Marc, are you feeling alright? I mean, you didn't insult the rubber sword mob, or list the names of Those Who Have Gibbered About Laurielle Miller. Next time... Ed.] Er, yes boss. You mean there'll be a next time?

Letters seen to by Marc Gascoigne

FRACAS!

The Readers' Revenge - The Poll Results

Over the couple of months, we'll spend some time looking over the results of the biggest ever White Dwarf Readers Survey. It will take that long for two simple reasons; there is a lot of information to be passed on, and there are still some permutations the computer operators at Eastwood haven't tried out yet! Hardly surprising, when you consider that they have dealt with some 5,500 responses and are still going...

Still, here are a few interesting snippets, dragged from the heaps of info we have thus far collated:

Question One - The Departments: Much as was featured in last issue's letter column, it's *'Gook* and *Thrud* which are the most popular of the regular departments, and *2020 Vision* which gets the largest 'no' vote.

Question Two - Best Issue to Date/Question Five - Best Issue from the last 12 Months: There wasn't much to choose between these two; the overall category saw the votes building up gradually from about 50 votes on average for each issue in the 50s to about 200 for the 70s. Three issues stand out: 76 (589 votes), 79 (593 votes) and 80 (576 votes).

Question Three - Best Cover: 817 votes for John Blanche's *Amazonia Gothique* from issue 79 and 506 for issue 78 were the two outstanding returns. Again, the votes were piled up towards the more recent issues, which makes the 119 recorded for issue 54 and the 330 for WD67 all the more impressive.

Question Four - Earliest Issue Purchased: 616 voters have purchased an issue of WD from the 1-30 range, and 2054 have an issue earlier than 51! That's long time loyalty for you; and 50-100 of the 5,000+ respondents have joined us each issue since WD71. A healthy mix of new readers and old.

Question Six - Best Scenario/Question Seven - Best Feature: These haven't come out of the computer yet; there were too many candidates! We'll try to get these answers by next month...

Question Eight - More Features/Scenarios: One of the questions designed to shape the way WD goes in future - and it's effectively a draw. For more features - 1,339. For more scenarios - 1,481. Those who feel the balance is about right - 2,461. It looks like we're hitting the right mark here, more or less...

Questions Nine & Ten - The Departments: One of the more controversial decisions we made in the last year was the phasing out of the individual, regular departments for certain games. Q9 asked if people went along with this: and the result was Approve - 1,213, Disapprove - 441, No Opinion - 1,019 and those who felt they missed a particular department 2,586. Support for individual departments broke down as follows: *Starbase* - 911, *Treasure Chest* - 1,705, *Crawling Chaos* - 1,007, *Fiend Factory* - 1,224, *Rune Rites* - 802, *Heroes & Villains* - 427. It looks like there might have been life in the old hardware machines, after all. *Treasure Chest* was always the most popular of them.

Question Eleven - Scenario Stats: A nice simple guideline to us. The answers we got were: 1 system scenarios - 2,387, Multi-system - 2,115, no system - 759. Not too much to choose between single-system and multi-system stats for most people then, and we'll experiment with these two formats over the next few issues. In the last Poll, 68% wanted more multi-stat scenarios.

Question Twelve - How Many Other People Read Your White Dwarf?: 1,826 of you don't let *anybody* else get their grubby hands on your mag (and quite right too). After that, it works out like this: 1 - 1,408, 2 - 997, 3 - 495, 4 - 254, 5 - 151, 6 - 58, 7 - 35, 8+ - 123. Interestingly, this means about 2.58 people read each copy of *White Dwarf* on average - which means that there are way over 100,000 readers out there. Quite a few of us these days, eh guys...

Question Thirteen - Other Magazines (hiss, boo): This question broke down into five sub-sections, which asked if you bought every issue, bought some issues, read a friend's copy, preferred the magazine to White Dwarf, or found less interesting than WD. The results were:

	Buy every	Buy some	Read Friends	Prefer	Not so good
Dragon	57	590	703	74	587
Tortured Souls	55	358	312	65	460
Different Worlds	27	137	151	60	532
Heroes	14	67	108	53	508
Challenge	37	39	75	48	504
Warlock	347	1,008	791	53	881
GMPubs	99	196	180	56	481
Adventurer	816	736	641	70	653

Make of that what you will; it looks like WD is the only magazine for an awful lot of readers. Leaving modesty aside, I think even we would take the last column with a pinch of salt - according to this over 500 people prefer WD to mags (*Heroes* and *Challenge*) 300+ of them haven't read...

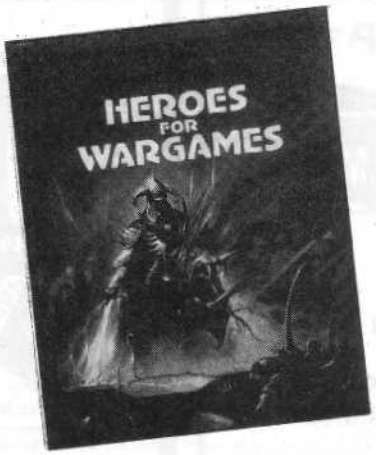
Question Fourteen - Do You Read Fanzines?: 748 do, 4,504 don't.

Question Fifteen - Which Fanzine is Your Favourite?: Results to follow.

That's it this time round. In next month's Fracas we get to the really meaty questions - and one or two surprises!

Bits & Pieces

For anyone interested in miniature figures, Stewart Parkinson's *Heroes For Wargames* is worth considering. Despite the title, the book isn't about wargames as such, but has a lot of standard material about how to make fantasy models - a kind of extended *'Eavy Metal*, really. Very coffee table, very much a Christmas present for somebody who wants to make a start on painting figures. *Heroes for Wargames* is a Paper Tiger book, and costs £12.95 (hardback) or £7.95 (paperback).



If you play *Warrior Knights*, you might be interested to know that we now have a sheet of *Warrior Knights Questions and Answers*. This has been produced by Derek Carver, the game's inventor, and includes all the questions that he has been asked most often about rules interpretations and possible ambiguities. If you would like a copy, send a large SSAE to *Warrior Knights Q&As, c/o White Dwarf, Enfield Chambers, 14-16 Low Pavement, Nottingham, NG1 7DL.*